

# STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup>

**Stiller emerges  
as box-office  
powerhouse**  
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Actor  
Ben Stiller

**Batman joins  
ranks at Iraq's  
Camp Liberty**  
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**Ancient French  
fortress  
comes to life**  
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Volume 63, No. 281

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2005

50¢

# Iraqi unit arrests top al-Qaida lieutenant

**Detained leader allegedly behind deadly car bombings in Baghdad**  
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## Pats, Eagles live up to preseason billing

Early favorites to meet in Jacksonville

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AP photos

Above: Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb is greeted by a sidelined Terrell Owens after Dorsey Levens ran for a touchdown in the first quarter against the Falcons in the NFC championship game on Sunday. Left: Patriots coach Bill Belichick is hugged by quarterback Tom Brady after New England advanced to the Super Bowl for the third time in four years with a 41-27 win over the Steelers in the AFC championship.

## STARS &amp; STRIPES

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## News Tracker ... What's new with old news

## States

**Snow delays clergy sex trial:** The winter storm that pounded the Northeast prompted Mass. Gov. Mitt Romney to keep some nonessential state workers home Monday, including employees at the courthouse where a high-profile clergy sex abuse case was to begin. Romney's announcement meant that opening statements in the trial of defrocked priest Paul Shanley would not begin in Middlesex Superior Court until Tuesday. A jury was seated last week.

## Military

**Aircraft lawsuit:** The families of five National Guardsmen killed when their transport plane crashed in Georgia four years ago settled their lawsuit Monday against the aircraft's manufacturers.

The families will receive \$3.75 million from the companies that made and maintained the C-23 B+ Sherpa cargo plane and its parts: Montreal-based Bombardier Inc. and its subsidiary, plane maker Short Brothers PLC; Duncan Aviation Inc. of Lincoln, Neb., and Rockwell International of Milwaukee and its former subsidiary Rockwell Collins Inc. of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

## World

**Vioxx death report:** The medical journal the Lancet published a study Tuesday of deaths related to the anti-inflammatory drug Vioxx after withholding the report because the researcher said he had been threatened by superiors at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Dr. David Graham, who works in the FDA's office of drug safety, has said he was firmly discouraged from publishing his data questioning the safety of Vioxx, which was withdrawn from the market in September.

**Microsoft in Europe:** Microsoft Corp. will not appeal an interim European Union ruling forcing it to strip Media Player from its Windows platform, and said the first versions of its flagship operating system without the music and video playing program will arrive at EU retailers in the coming weeks.

**Kosovo's future:** A senior European Union official said Monday the EU intends to discuss Kosovo's future with President Bush during his February stop in Europe.

EU Enlargement Commissioner Oli Rehn said the organization expects also to discuss the future of the Western Balkans, one of the poorest regions in Europe, which is still recovering from the decade-long ethnic conflicts of the 1990s.

**Austrian church exodus:** A cleric who led a Vatican investigation into the discovery of a large cache of child pornography at a Roman Catholic seminary in Austria says he sees no end in sight to the record number



**Sudan visit:** Families sit outside their shelters Thursday in a camp for returnees in Rumbek, in southern Sudan. U.S. lawmakers who met with Darfur rebels in western Sudan and visited camps for Sudanese refugees in Chad over the weekend said they will ask Washington to push for U.N. sanctions against the Sudanese government. The lawmakers will also be asking for a larger African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur as well as expanding its mandate to begin enforcing existing cease-fire agreements, a congressional staff member said. Also Monday, leaders of Sudan's main southern rebel movement unanimously endorsed an agreement to end the civil war, paving the way for a new constitution.

of disillusioned Austrians leaving the church.

Bishop Klaus Kuegel told Austrian television in an interview Sunday night that "for so many, the connection with the church has become thin" following last year's scandal.

**Bird flu pandemic:** World Health Organization members struggled Monday to find common ground on how countries should tackle any future influenza pandemic, especially a potential human variant of deadly bird flu.

A session of the 32-nation WHO executive board in Geneva was bogged down on the issue of whether countries hit by a massive outbreak could override patents on anti-flu drugs, and the meeting was halted to let delegates call their governments for guidance.

**Al-Qaida suspects:** Two alleged al-Qaida members accused of plotting an attack in Iraq went before a federal judge Monday in Frankfurt, Germany, and could face up to 10 years in jail if found guilty of belonging to a terrorist organization.

The men were arrested Sunday in the western cities of Mainz and Bonn. At a closed-door session in the southern city of Karlsruhe, a judge was determining whether there was sufficient evidence to order them held pending charges.

## War on terrorism

**British detainees at Gitmo:** British Muslim leaders lobbied the government Monday to give medical treatment and counseling to four Britons expected to return home this week from the U.S. base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where they were held for more than three years.

The Muslim Council of Britain said the four, some of whom claim they were tortured, would be heavily traumatized and in need of care.

**Kidnapped journalist:** The director of the French newspaper Liberation said Monday he suspects that one of his reporters missing for nearly three weeks in Iraq has been kidnapped for ransom, although there was still no word on her fate.

The newspaper's Florence Aubenas and her Iraqi translator, Hussein Hanoun al-Saadi, were last seen leaving her Baghdad hotel on Jan. 5.

About 40 editorial chiefs from major French media and international media organizations with offices in Paris met at Liberation's Paris headquarters Monday to discuss coverage of Iraq in the wake of Aubenas' disappearance.

Stories and photo from The Associated Press

## Correction

In Friday's edition of Stars and Stripes, the wrong date was given for the memorial service of Spc. Lissie K. Brown, 94th Engineer Battalion, who died Jan. 18 in a car accident near Grafenwohr, Germany. Brown's memorial service was held Monday at the Grafenwohr main post chapel.



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# GIs get gear appropriate for deployment

## Army steps in to give soldiers equipment they had been buying for downrange

BY WARD SANDERSON  
Stars and Stripes

GERMERSHEIM, Germany — About 3,700 soldiers in Europe have walked out of a green warehouse building at a remote Army depot this month and come away with savings.

Those savings aren't necessarily green, but desert camouflage. To keep troops from spending what the Army found was an average of \$300 per year on equipment, the service is now issuing troops everything from improved helmets to seasonal boots. The service plans to issue the gear to every soldier headed to Afghanistan, and to as many troops as possible serving in Iraq.

"When we initially went down we didn't have any fielding like this," said Sgt. Carl Johnson with the 29th Support Group, based in Kaiserslautern. Johnson was on his way to Afghanistan and had previously served in Iraq. He said he could have used both cold-weather and hot-weather boots there, despite the region's reputation as a hotbox. It rains and gets muddy in winter.

"So that definitely helps," Johnson said of the winter-issue boots. "They're Gore-Tex."

The troops who lined up for gear and to get quick lessons on how to wear the new-style helmets were on the business end of the Rapid Fielding Initiative, the Army's plan to give soldiers the gear they generally tended to buy themselves or that the Army has determined the troops need downrange.

All troops would get better helmets and boots. Troops with brigade combat teams would get the extra kit, such as grappling hooks, door rams, battle axes and fiber-optic viewers.

"None of this is rocket science, but I've



RAYMOND T. CONWAY/Stars and Stripes

Sgt. John Cooling, left, helps Pfc. Christopher Keyes adjust his new Advanced Combat Helmet in Gernersheim, Germany, on Monday. The soldiers from the 29th Support Group in Kaiserslautern, Germany, soon will deploy to Afghanistan and were issued several new items under the Army Materiel Command's Rapid Fielding Initiative to "enhance the soldiers survivability, lethality and mobility with mission essential equipment."

## Mullen visits Belgrade for top-level talks

The Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia-Montenegro — The NATO commander for southeastern Europe held top-level talks Monday in Belgrade on security issues and ongoing defense reforms in Serbia-Montenegro.

Adm. Michael G. Mullen, in charge of NATO's Joint Force Command based in Naples, Italy, met with Defense Minister Prvoslav Davinic and Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica. He was to meet President Boris Tadic.

Davinic told reporters that security issues in Kosovo, the southern, ethnic Albanian majority province run by NATO-led peacekeepers and a U.N. mission — figured highly in the talks.

Belgrade has been concerned for Kosovo's minority Serbs, targeted in ethnic attacks in March. The province remains only officially part of Serbia-Montenegro, Yugoslavia's successor state.

Mullen expressed confidence that peacekeepers were "now in very good shape" to prevent violence such as last year's rampage by ethnic Albanian mobs.



## Eye on the prize

Sgt. 1st Class Tom Siple of Dallas, Texas, and the 52nd Signal Battalion, frolics in the snow Monday with Yogi, his 5-year-old Chihuahua-Jack Russell terrier mix at Kelley Barracks in Stuttgart, Germany. An overnight storm coated many local roads with a sheet of ice, causing schools and offices in the Stuttgart military community to open two hours late. Light snow was forecast for Tuesday and Wednesday.

CHARLIE COON  
Stars and Stripes

## USAF, Navy might turn away recruits

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — While the Army and the Marine Corps are straining to meet recruiting goals, the Air Force and the Navy may wind up turning away thousands of potential recruits, according to a report in USA Today.

The Air Force told the paper it has a backlog of about 9,000 enlistees who have not yet been called to duty.

It has slashed its 2005 recruiting target from 35,000 to 24,000. Together, the Air Force and Navy say they are planning to reduce the total number of troops by more than 27,000 in 2005, USA Today reported.

In contrast, the Army and the Marine Corps, which are providing the bulk of ground troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, are adding more than 12,000 troops this year.

One of the primary reasons the Air Force and the Navy are so flush with troops and willing recruits, personnel experts say, is that those branches have suffered relatively few casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I think the most obvious explanation is that you're less likely to be killed or wounded in the Navy or Air Force," Richard Kohn, a professor at the University of North Carolina who studies military culture, told the paper.

Of the more than 1,350 U.S. deaths during the Iraq war, 41 have come from the Air Force and the Navy, according to a Defense Department breakdown.

Both the Marines and the Army say they expect to meet their recruiting goals this year but acknowledge it will be difficult, USA Today reported.

# New gym opens its doors at Cricignano



Kathleen Sullivan was the first customer to enter the brand new Fitness Forum gym at the Cricignano support site in Naples, Italy, which opened Monday.

BY SANDRA JONTZ  
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — It was like Christmas in January on Monday for Petty Officer 2nd Class Ricky Dyer, who has been "waiting ages" for a gym to open at the Cricignano support site, where the Navy placed its housing units.

The 32-year-old surgical technician at the hospital across the street from the Fitness Forum said he couldn't be more appreciative of the convenience the new state-of-the-art facility now affords him. Before Monday's grand opening, he'd have to drive the roughly 20 minutes to the Capodichino base for a workout.

"This is great. I've been waiting a long, long time for this place to open," Dyer said.

The only downside Dyer could see was the close proximity of all of the weight-training equipment.

"When it's crowded, they might be too close for comfort," he said.

Kathleen Sullivan was the gym's very first customer, arriving at 6 a.m. on the dot to sneak in a 30-minute workout before her four children went off to school, she said.

The Navy spent more than \$850,000 on new equipment, which includes "cardio theaters" where customers can plug in earphones to hear music, news or sports on the upright and recumbent exercise bikes and stair step-



PHOTOS BY SANDRA JONTZ/Stars and Stripes

After several delays, the new Fitness Forum gym at Cricignano support site, Naples, Italy, finally opened for business at 6 a.m. Monday. The Navy spent more the \$850,000 on new equipment.

pers, said Dominick Corrado, sports and fitness director. Eventually, the treadmills and cross-trainers each will have its own 17-inch plasma television for workout entertainment, he said.

The facility boasts an outdoor pool, two racquetball courts, a spin room with 26 stationary bikes, an aerobics room, free weight room, circuit weight area, cardio area, and men's and women's locker rooms with dry saunas.

The basketball court is lined for competition and intramural play and will have six backboards and three volleyball setups.

The pool, with eight lanes, a one-meter diving board, and a 50-foot slide in the deep end, will open Memorial Day weekend (May 28) and operate through Labor Day. The pool features an outdoor Jacuzzi and a children's pool. The pool will have seasonal water aerobics, swim lessons, water exercise and military lap swim.

Gym hours are from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Sunday and American holidays.

E-mail Sandra Jontz at: jontzs@mail.strips.osd.mil

## Sailors in Europe to get Gitmo guard duty

BY SANDRA JONTZ  
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Sailors from U.S. Navy bases in Europe will deploy to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in March to give a reprieve to U.S. soldiers currently guarding detainees at the U.S. military prison there.

The 12 sailors from European installations will join 35 Navy masters-at-arms from the Pacific bases of Misawa Naval Air Facility, Yokosuka Naval Base, Atsugi Naval Air Facility, and Sasebo Naval Base, officials have said.

Europe-based sailors will deploy for up to 290 days, while Pacific-based sailors will head to Cuba for 120 days, Pacific officials told Stars and Stripes last week. Officials in Europe do not know why the deployment orders differ.

The 12 sailors from Europe, nine of whom are enlisted sailors and three are officers, will receive one-week general custodial training at Navy Region Southeast in Jacksonville, Fla., before moving on to a two-week detainee training course provided by the Army at Fort Lewis, Wash., said Chief Petty Officer John Musser, a spokesman for Navy Region Command-Europe.

Also unlike the Pacific command's contribution, not all of the Europe-based sailors are masters-at-arms; though all do have a Naval Enlisted Classification code of 9575 for correctional custody specialist ashore, Musser said.

"They have different rates and come from different commands, but they are a dynamic group of several enlisted [and officer] personnel from different ratings all sharing that NEC," Musser said. For example, one sailor is a religious-program specialist in a chaplain's office, but has NEC 9575.

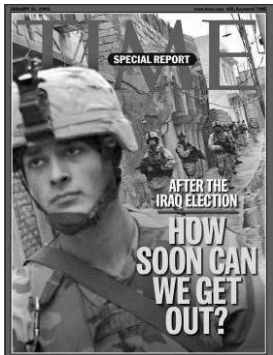
Because they come from different ratings and different bases, their absence is not expected to adversely affect day-to-day operations, he said.

"We don't want to rob Peter to pay Paul, but this is what we can do, so that's what we're doing," he said.

No exact departure date has been set, Musser said.

E-mail Sandra Jontz at: jontzs@mail.strips.osd.mil

## GI appears on cover of Time



TIME MAGAZINE/AP

In this handout provided by Time magazine, Pfc. Christopher Lujan, of Rio Rancho, N.M., is shown on the cover of the Jan. 31 issue on patrol in Mosul, Iraq. Time magazine's special report on Iraq's upcoming elections brings the war closer to home for his parents, Carol and Samuel Lujan. The cover captures a stoic image of the young New Mexico soldier — the first glimpse of his son since his deployment to the Middle East last January. Lujan's family is one of many military families waiting — and watching — amid vows by rebels to disrupt balloting in next weekend's vote. When Lujan's commander called the soldier's father, he also said Lujan was returning to the states next month.

## McCain seeks hearing about new DOD spy unit

THOMAS B. EDSALL  
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said the Senate Armed Services Committee will hold hearings on a Washington Post report that the Department of Defense is interpreting U.S. law to give the secretary broad authority over clandestine operations abroad.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has created a new espionage unit called the Strategic Support Branch, according to the news report, but McCain, speaking on CBS's "Face the Nation" said he doubts Rumsfeld has broken any laws.

"I'm always sorry to read about things in The Washington Post when they affect a committee that I am a member of," McCain said.

Pentagon spokesman Lawrence T. Di Rita Sunday issued a carefully worded statement that appears to dispute parts of the Post article.

"There is no unit that is directly reportable to the secretary of defense for clandestine operations as is described in the Washington Post," he said.

In addition, Di Rita said, "The Department is not attempting to 'bend' statutes to fit desired activities, as is suggested in this article."

At the same time, Di Rita said, "It is accurate and should not be surprising that the Department of Defense is attempting to improve its long-standing human intelligence capability."

Di Rita said the war on terror necessitates "a framework by which military forces and traditional human intelligence work more closely together and in greater numbers than they have in the past. These actions are being taken within existing statutory authorities to support traditional military operations and any assertion to the contrary is wrong."

The Strategic Support Branch, according to the Post, was designed to conduct the Pentagon's use of "human" or human intelligence operations, including the recruitment of spies and interrogation of prisoners. The recruited agents could include "notorious figures" whose ties to the United States would be embarrassing if revealed, according to a Pentagon memo.



# Iraqi forces arrest al-Zarqawi's top aide

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraqi security forces have arrested the "most lethal" top lieutenant of al-Qaida's leader in Iraq — a man allegedly behind most of the car bombings in Baghdad since the U.S.-led invasion, including the 2003 assault on U.N. headquarters that killed 22 people, the prime minister's office said Monday.

Sami Mohammed Ali Said al-Jaaf, also known as Abu Omar al-Kurdi, was arrested on Jan. 15 in Baghdad, a government statement said Monday. Two other militants linked to Jordanian-born

## Suspect allegedly responsible for most of the Baghdad car bombings since invasion

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's terror group also were arrested, authorities announced Monday.

Al-Zarqawi heads al-Qaida in Iraq, the terror network's local affiliate. The group is behind many of the car bombings, beheadings, assassinations and other attacks driving the insurgency in Iraq.

The suspect was linked to the August 2003 bombing of U.N. headquarters in

Baghdad, which killed the top U.N. envoy in Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, and 21 others. The U.N. attack was "planned and directed by two others affiliated with Abu Omar," the statement said.

Al-Jaaf was responsible for 32 car bombing attacks that killed hundreds of Iraqis, the statement said. Al-Jaaf "confessed to building approximately 75 percent of the car bombs used in attacks in Baghdad

since March 2003," said Thaeir al-Naqib, spokesman for interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi.

Abu Omar al-Kurdi claims responsibility for some of the most ruthless attacks on Iraqi police forces and police stations," al-Naqib said.

The suspect built the car bomb used to attack a shrine in the Shiite holy city of Najaf that killed more than 85 people, including Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim, in August 2003.

He also assembled the car bomb used to assassinate Izzaddin Saleem, president of the now-defunct Iraqi Governing Council in May, the statement said.

# Suicide car bomber strikes outside Allawi HQ in Iraq

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A suicide driver detonated a car bomb outside the prime minister's party headquarters Monday, injuring 10 people in a blast claimed by the al-Qaida affiliate in Iraq.

The suicide bomber struck at a police checkpoint on the road leading to Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's Iraqi National Accord offices in central Baghdad, shaking the city center with a thunderous explosion. The wounded included eight policemen and two civilians, said Dr. Mudhar Abdul-Hussien of Yarmouk Hospital.

Al-Qaida's wing in Iraq said in a Web posting that "one of the young lions in the suicide regiment" carried out the attack against the party office of Allawi, "the agent of the Jews and the Christians."

The attacks occurred six days before Iraq's crucial national elections, the first since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Insurgents have condemned the elections and vowed to disrupt them.

In an audiotape posted Sunday on the Web, a speaker claiming to be Abu Musab al-Zarqawi declared "fiere war" on democracy and said anyone who takes part in next weekend's Iraqi elections would be considered "an infidel."

"We have declared a fierce war on this evil principle of democracy and those who follow this wrong ideology," the speaker said. "Anyone who tries to help set up this system is part of it."

The speaker warned Iraqis to be careful of "the enemy's plan to implement so-called democracy in your country." He said the Americans have engineered the election to install Shiite Muslims in power. Al-Zarqawi, who is a Sunni Arab like most of the insurgents here, has in the past branded Shiites as heretics.

The authenticity of the tape could not immediately be verified.

The Jordanian-born al-Zarqawi heads al-Qaida in Iraq, the terror network's local affiliate. The group is behind many of the car bombings, beheadings, assassinations and other attacks driving the insurgency in Iraq.

The United States has offered a



A banner advertising an amusement park is seen in front of Iraqi police securing the area following a car bomb explosion Monday in Baghdad. The suicide car bomber struck near Iraqi interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's party headquarters, injuring at least 10 people, police and hospital officials said.

\$25 million reward for al-Zarqawi's capture or death — the same amount as for al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.

In the election, voters are to choose a 275-member National Assembly and legislatures in each of the 18 provinces. Voters in the Kurdish-ruled area of the north will also elect a new regional parliament.

American and Iraqi officials have warned they expect rebels to unleash bloodshed and mayhem to keep voters from the polls in what supporters are advertising as the first free election in this country since the overthrow of Iraq's monarchy in 1958.

In other election news, an Arab political faction has pulled out of this weekend's general elections because Kurds deported by Saddam Hussein from Kirkuk were given the right to vote in the city, the leader of the group said Monday.

Wasfi Assi Hassan al-Obaidi said his 24-member United Arab Front decided to withdraw because "we are not happy about allowing deported Kurds to register and vote in Kirkuk."

Kurdish political leaders had initially threatened a boycott of the vote, but decided earlier this

month to participate after authorities met their demands to allow displaced Kurds to return and cast ballots in the city.

Some Kurds have called for Kirkuk to be made part of the autonomous Kurdistan, a Switzerland-sized area of northern Iraq where Kurds have ruled themselves since the end of the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

In Afghanistan, President Hamid Karzai urged Iraqis to follow the example of Afghan citizens in turning out for landmark elections despite the threat of violence, saying their votes would help their country toward prosperity.

"The Iraqi people must not fear terrorists. Instead, they should make their elections a success with bravery and courage... they must endeavor to ensure the rule of democracy and the right to elect their leader," Karzai said in a statement.

The U.S.-backed Afghan leader won Afghanistan's first ever direct vote for president on Oct. 9, almost three years after American forces ousted the Taliban for harboring Osama bin Laden.

Violence continues in Iraq, with three U.S. soldiers were wounded Sunday in a mortar attack in Samarra north of Bag-

dad, including one seriously, the U.S. command said.

On Sunday night, insurgents blew up three schools to be used as polling centers in Tikrit.

Gunmen firing from a speeding car shot dead an Iraqi police lieutenant as he was returning home Sunday night in Baghdad, an Interior Ministry official said. North of the capital, the deputy governor of Iraq's Diyala province, Ghassan al-Khadran, escaped an assassination attempt Monday morning as a roadside bomb struck his car.

On Monday, mortar rounds slammed into an Iraqi National Guard camp near Baghdad International Airport as the rumble of distant explosions reverberated through the capital. There was no report of casualties in the mortar attack.

Monday's blast in Baghdad rattled buildings along the Tigris River in the center of the city and sent black smoke rising above the skyline. U.S. military helicopters cut through overcast skies above the scene.

Police fired on the car as it sped toward them, killing the driver as the blast ripped the vehicle apart, said an Interior Ministry official.

Splintered police vehicles were

## U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Sunday, at least 1,372 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count.

At least 1,077 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is four higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. Friday.

The British military has reported 76 deaths; Italy, 20; Poland, 16; Ukraine, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,234 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes least 968 deaths, resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

A U.S. soldier was killed Saturday on a security patrol in Mosul, Iraq.

The latest identifications reported by military:

No identifications reported.

engulfed in flames, and gunfire rattled after the explosion.

Meanwhile, an Iraqi lawyer on Saddam Hussein's defense team has received several death threats in the last three weeks and has gone into hiding, the chief defense attorney for the deposed Iraqi leader said Monday.

Khalil al-Duleimi, one of 25 attorneys representing Saddam, told other lawyers on the team that the threats followed his Dec. 16 meeting with the ousted Iraqi leader, according to chief defense attorney Ziad al-Khasasneh.

# General: Iran instability could harm Afghan mission

By STEPHEN GRAHAM

The Associated Press

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — A senior American commander in Afghanistan said Monday he knew of no U.S. spying missions in Iran and cautioned that instability in Tehran could harm his mission.

The New Yorker magazine last week reported that the U.S. military since last year has been carrying out undercover reconnaissance operations to gather intelligence and targeting information inside Iran.

Maj. Gen. Eric Olson, the operational commander of U.S. forces pursuing Taliban and al-Qaida remnants in Afghanistan,

told The Associated Press he was unaware of any such operations, but he also said they would not come under his control.

Asked if he feared Iran could react to such missions — or even the perception that they had taken place — by trying to create problems in Afghanistan, Olson said: "I think it is in Afghanistan's interest to see stability in Iran and anything that is destabilizing or causes turmoil in Iran, especially close to the border, would not be good for Afghanistan and would not be good for my mission."

Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Seymour Hersh reported in The New Yorker that President Bush's administration had been

"conducting secret reconnaissance missions inside Iran at least since last summer." U.S. Defense Department officials said the article was filled with mistakes but did not deny its basic point.

Bush says his administration will not rule out the possibility of using military force against Iran over its controversial nuclear program. (See related story on Page 12.) Vice President Cheney said Thursday that Iran "is right at the top of the list" of world trouble spots.

Iran's intelligence minister, Ali Yunesi, said Sunday that a U.S. military strike against it would be a strategic blunder, and he brushed aside tough talk from Washing-

ton as psychological warfare rather than a real threat. Iranian officials say no American commandos have entered Iran.

Olson, speaking to an AP reporter after making a presentation to Kabul-based diplomats at the main U.S. base north of Kabul, said the only Iran-related operations run by the 18,000 mainly American soldiers under his command were efforts to intercept spies or militants entering Afghanistan from the west.

Olson told diplomats that Taliban militants had been so weakened by U.S. operations and the advances of Hamid Karzai's government that his forces would soon spend more time on reconstruction than pursuing militants.

## 'Rambo' helps keep U.S. base in Kabul secure

### Tough Afghan guards Camp Phoenix gates

By KEVIN DOUGHERTY

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan

A taxi stops near the front gate of Camp Phoenix on the outskirts of Kabul. Within seconds a short, stocky man wielding a pipe starts to approach the vehicle. The man with the lead stick means business.

"Move the car," he demands in a language anyone could understand. "Move the car. Now!"

The occupant hastily pays his fare, and the taxi driver wastes no time backing away.

With the way clear, the Afghan man U.S. soldiers call "Rambo" returns to his post just inside the gate to resume his vigil.

A person would be hard pressed to find anyone in the camp who doesn't know or hasn't heard of Rambo, so named by troops in the 10th Mountain Division.

"He's definitely a legend on this camp," Sgt. Michael Sweet said.

While Sweet, an Indiana National Guardsman, is a shift sergeant, it's abundantly clear that Rambo is the primary gatekeeper.

In June 2003, when U.S. forces first rolled up to the front gate of what was then a Russian-Afghan transport compound, Rambo was waiting. He hasn't left.

Stories of Rambo permeate the base. Some are factual. Others are not.

"This is my hooch," he says through an interpreter as he opens the door to a small, cramped room immediately off the front gate.

His real name is Jamal Udin, born in Kabul "maybe 41 years ago," he said, to parents who moved to the capital from northern Afghanistan.

For many Afghans, details such as years and dates aren't all that critical.

As a teen, he said, he served as a conscript in the Afghan army, which, at the time, was under the thumb of the Russians.

After military service, Udin got a truck-driving job with the transport company. His trips took him



PHOTOS BY KEVIN DOUGHERTY/Stars and Stripes

**Above:** Jamal Udin, known as "Rambo" to U.S. troops in Kabul, Afghanistan, snaps a salute to a military vehicle entering Camp Phoenix, east of the capital. Udin has stood watch at the front gate for more than two years. He carries a lead pipe to ward off danger and salutes every military vehicle heading off or on base. **Right:** U.S. troops said "Rambo" has been a huge help patrolling the front gate and keeping the base safe.

all over the region: Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan.

It was during this time that he married his wife, Shagull, who was a couple of years younger than he was. By Afghan standards, Udin had a good life. He had a steady job, an apartment, six children and a wife he adored.

The turning point for Udin, he said, came several years ago when a rocket-propelled grenade apparently fired by a Taliban soldier slammed into his apartment, killing his wife.

Udin remembers the time of day — 10 or 11 a.m. — but not the year. The Taliban captured Kabul in September 1996, but were beating back counterattacks for sometime afterward, so it could've been 1997.

"We loved each other," Udin said of his wife, "which is why I will never remarry."

Udin took his brood — four sons and two daughters — to Pakistan, where Shagull has family. They remained there for about four years.

"While I was in Pakistan, I saw President Bush and his wife on TV," Udin said. "They said: 'We will help Afghanistan. We will re-

build Afghanistan.' That's why I like the Americans, and why I like to work for them."

That commitment to his country prompted him to return to Kabul. Because Udin had sold his apartment, the only logical place to go, he figured, was his old workplace. His bosses didn't have a driver's job open, so they assigned him to the front gate — and he's been there ever since.

"He takes a lot of work off of our hands," said Spc. David Young, who, like Sweet, is with Company C, 151st Infantry Battalion.

Udin has an incredible capacity to remember faces, Sweet said. He always knows who belongs on base and who doesn't. If a stranger approaches, the man they call Rambo steps forward first to sort things out. And his lead pipe, wrapped in red tape, rarely leaves his hand, sending a subtle but convincing message not to cross him.

The guy is dependable, too. Udin typically works from 5:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., every night. Last year, he can recall taking only two days off. Every fourth or fifth night, he'll visit his brother's house to see his daughter Zarnina, who is now 10.

While Udin frets about his daughter, the troops worry about him.

Udin's room is filled with gifts from well-meaning, young Americans. A general's driver from the previous rotation gave him a TV, a sergeant from the Indiana Guard bought him a space heater, and another current occupant of the base, a female soldier, presented him with a blanket, gloves and a black, wool hat with the name "Rambo" stitched across it.

And that's only scratching the surface. There are several 12-pack soda boxes, instant soup, snacks, sunglasses and even a bottle of bubble, the type that kids like to play with. Udin also has his own camouflage uniform.

"They are always taking care of me," he said. The attention, he added, "makes me work harder and harder for them."

For months after the Americans arrived, Udin refused to accept money. His company was already paying him, and he saw no reason to double dip. When his company quit paying him, he accepted the Americans' offer. Today, his monthly salary is \$420, plus meals.

"Have a good day, Rambo," Spc. David A. Pranger said after he delivered lunch to Udin.



"He's not really military, but we bring him breakfast, lunch and dinner," Pranger added. "He's a cool guy. He's always here to greet us."

Indeed, whenever a military vehicle — U.S. or coalition — enters or leaves the compound, the occupants inside get saluted.

Udin patrols the area outside the gate with a vengeance because the area tends to attract looters looking for work or handouts. The compound is also situated along a busy street.

Terrorists, he explained, "might attack the front gate with a car bomb."

A couple of months ago, an Afghan fired a French military vehicle.

Udin sprang into action immediately and charged the armed man. He was not disarmed, the French shot the man themselves.

"I'm not scared," Udin said. "I feel like I am in the Army, so if I die, no problem."

"Rambo is one of the most honest, genuine persons I have ever met," Sweet said. "He's worth every penny they pay him. He never complains."

Udin hopes to soon get an apartment so he can move his five children back home. The pay he receives from the Army has helped him immeasurably, but he states he has no intention of abandoning his post any time soon.

"Whenever the Americans leave, I will leave," he said. "As long as they want me to stay, I will stay."

E-mail Kevin Dougherty at: [doughertyk@mail.strips.esd.mil](mailto:doughertyk@mail.strips.esd.mil)

# Photos from the Front

Presented by Stars and Stripes Advertising & AIG Europe



**ABOVE** Spec. Scott Brennan, a medic with the 725th Main Support Battalion, examines an Afghan boy's throat during a cooperative medical assistance mission Jan. 18 in Sadaq, Afghanistan.

Bradley Ritten/U.S. Army

**BELOW** Sgt. Jason Burchis displays his M16 A4 rifle that had an enemy round hit the front sight post during an ambush in December.

Rich Mattingly/U.S. Army



Chris Stamp/U.S. Army



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# REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

Stars and Stripes



JASON CHUDY/Stars and Stripes

Senior Airman Joe Batman of the 732nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron stands next to his small locker at Camp Liberty.

# Batman deployed to Camp Liberty

Stars and Stripes

**G**otham City is not the only place with a Batman in its ranks.

Baghdad's Camp Liberty has its own — in this case Senior Airman Joe Batman of the 732nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron detachment.

"It's a German name," he explained. "It is, from what I'm told, a German officer's servant."

Whatever its origin, it has drawn a lot of attention to the 25-year-old Dolphin, Va., native.

Batman deployed to Iraq from Alaska's Elmendorf Air Force Base about two months ago and expects to be in country until mid-2005.

"We thought it was a joke," said Senior Airman Hugo Vitale, about Batman's pending arrival a few months ago. "We were like 'Batman? Who the hell is Batman?'"

His Air Force brethren quickly got used to him — although he still does get a little ribbing from them. When he enters the Tactical Operations Center in their corner of the camp, other Air Force personnel always do the song: "duh-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh" — well, you know the rest.

Since the Air Force is greatly outnumbered by Army personnel on the camp most of the attention comes from soldiers, Batman said.

"They get really excited," he said. They do the "Look, I'm Batman" thing."

"They do the little song," Vitale added. "You can hear it in the background when we're walking."

Batman doesn't get upset with the attention drawn by his last name, and has never wished he was "Joe Smith" or something less, well, superhero-like.

"Nah, Batman's too cool," he said.

Though single, he hopes to have children someday and pass on the Batman name.

But there are some names that

are definitely out for the future kids.

"No Brucers or Robins," he explained.

Though he's probably the only Batman in Baghdad, he's not the only one in the military. His brother, Petty Officer 3rd Class Ira Bateman, is assigned as a mineman at Naval Station Ingleside, Texas, near Corpus Christi.

## Melancholy magic

Every seat on the bus from the post exchange to the northern part of Camp Liberty was full as it turned toward one of the camp's living areas.

Tunes were blaring, as they do every night in the "Wayne's World" bus, so named because of a piece of paper stuck in the window underneath the bus route sign.

Soldiers near Iraq talked with the old hands, a couple of whom said they were counting the days until their combat tours were over. Everyone seemed in a pretty good mood as the final few notes of Elton John's "Candle in the Wind" ended.

As the bus pulled into the living area, the first notes of the next song came on.

"Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away," crooned Paul McCartney. "Now it looks as though they're here to stay. Oh, I believe in yesterday."

Conversation came to standstill.

"Suddenly, I'm not half the man I used to be."

"There's a shadow hanging over me."

"Wayne's World," it seemed, had just gotten a lot smaller and much more personal.

One newly arrived officer wryly commented that he hoped none of the soldiers would start crying.

It wasn't said in jest.

Stars and Stripes reporter Jason Chudy contributed to this report. He is currently embedded with the 10th Mountain Division in Abu Ghraib, Iraq, and can be reached at: chudyj@mail.strips.esd.mil

# British major: Soldiers held in abuse acted outside order

BY TONY CZUCZKA

The Associated Press

OSNABRUECK, Germany — Three British soldiers accused of mistreating detained Iraqi civilians were acting outside an order to put looters to work, their commander testified Monday at their court-martial.

Maj. Dan Taylor testified last week he gave an order to make captured looters "work hard" picking up garbage to deter rampant theft at an aid warehouse outside Basra being guarded by British soldiers in May 2003.

However, he said Monday he did not have the group of soldiers supervised by Cpl. Daniel Kenyon, 33, the highest-ranking defendant, enforcing that plan on the day of the alleged abuse.

Their section "had no part in the work phase," Taylor testified.

Taylor has said he saw no abuse during the crackdown.

British media published photos of the abuse last week, causing outrage and expressions of disgust from politicians, including Prime Minister Tony Blair.

One photo shows a bound Iraqi being dangled over a loading dock by a forklift. Others show him and another Iraqi stripped and apparently forced to simulate sexual acts.

Defense lawyers for the three soldiers from the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers argue that they were following orders, a charge Taylor denied Friday.

In testy exchanges Monday, Taylor also rejected allegations by Kenyon's lawyer that he played down to his superiors how harshly he wanted soldiers to treat captured looters.

"You were trying as hard as

you could to downgrade the severity of your order," said lawyer Joseph Giret, who claimed that Taylor misled both his immediate superior and a general who questioned him earlier this month.

"You are prepared to let these soldiers be the sacrificial lambs so your own career can be preserved," the lawyer added. "That is not correct, sir," Taylor replied.

One of the defendants, Lance Cpl. Darren Larkin, 30, has pleaded guilty to one count of battery after prosecutors alleged he was the man shown in a photo standing with both feet on a tied-up Iraqi on the ground.

Larkin and Lance Cpl. Mark Cooley, 25, denied all other charges. Cooley is charged with tethering the detainee to the forklift and driving it. Kenyon is charged with several counts of failing to report abuse to superiors. He has pleaded not guilty.

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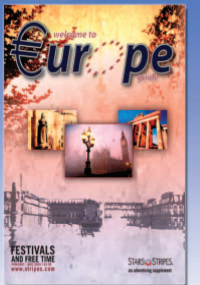
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## IN THE STATES



Parishioners on Sunday gather at the Memorial Wall for the Unborn at the Sacred Heart of Mary Catholic Church for the burial of several hundred fetuses received from a mortuary in Boulder, Colo.

# Bush talks to foes staging a protest of Roe v. Wade

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush told abortion opponents on Monday he shared their support for "a culture of life" and claimed progress in passing legislation to protect the vulnerable.

"We need most of all to change hearts and that is what we're doing," Bush said as anti-abortion activists marked the 32nd anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion with a day of rallies, protests and other activities.

The issue took on new urgency with the likelihood of a high court vacancy.

Bush addressed marchers by phone from the presidential retreat at Camp David, Md. Every anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision, prompts demonstrations by abortion rights opponents and proponents.

Activists on both sides of the abortion issue marched in demon-

## Colorado church buries fetuses

The Associated Press

BOULDER, Colo. — A Roman Catholic church buried the ashes of hundreds of aborted fetuses Sunday, a day after the 32nd anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision that made abortion legal, drawing criticism that the church was exploiting women's grief to make a political statement.

A crowd of 250 parishioners prayed as the ashes were buried in the Sacred Heart of Mary Church cemetery, while a handful of protesters gathered nearby holding signs that read, "This church is a grave robber." A mortuary hired by the abortion clinic to dispose of the fetuses had been giving the ashes to the church for years to be buried at a memorial. Dr. Warren Hern, clinic director, said he had no idea such an arrangement had been made and said his contract required the mortuary to bury the ashes in its own plot.

The church agreed to return the remains of 300 to 500 fetuses that had been cremated in November before the service began Sunday.

strations across the country Saturday, the actual anniversary of the Jan. 23 decision.

This year there is increasing speculation about Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist's health. Three other justices have had can-

cer. One or more court vacancies would give President Bush the chance to install another justice or justices who oppose the Roe decision, increasing the likelihood that at some point, the ruling could be overturned.

# High court rejects Florida appeal in Terry Schiavo case

BY GINA HOLLAND  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court refused Monday to reinstate a Florida law passed to keep a severely brain-damaged woman hooked to a feeding tube, clearing the way for it to be removed. How soon that would happen, however, was unclear.

The Florida Supreme Court had struck down the law last fall, and the justices were the last hope for state leaders who defended the law in a bitter long running dispute over the fate of Terri Schiavo.

Her husband, Michael Schiavo, contends she never wanted to be kept alive artificially. But her parents told justices in a filing that their son-in-law is trying to rush her death so he can inherit her estate and be free to marry another woman.

The Supreme Court did not comment in rejecting an appeal from Gov. Jeb Bush, who argued that the state had the authority to step in and pass the 2003 law that ordered Terri Schiavo's feeding tube reinserted six days after her husband had it removed.

The case goes back to state Judge George Greer, who already has ruled that the brain-damaged woman's husband could withdraw her feeding tube. Although several legal challenges are pending, the Supreme

## Supreme Court developments

In other developments Monday, the court:

■ Gave police broader search powers during traffic stops, ruling that drug-sniffing dogs can be used to check out motorists' cars even if officers have no reason to suspect they may be carrying narcotics.

■ Declined to consider whether states may offer license plates with anti-abortion messages, leaving lower courts divided over whether the programs in a dozen states unconstitutionally restrict dissenting views.

■ Asked federal courts to reconsider sentences for hundreds of defendants who contend they were wrongly punished under a sentencing system the court declared unconstitutional earlier this month.

■ Reinstated the death sentence of a man convicted of bludgeoning to death an elderly couple in Memphis, Tenn. Justices set aside a ruling by the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for Gary Bradford Cone.

■ Threw out the appeal of Mississippi death row inmate Marlon Howell less than two months after hearing his case, on grounds that Howell's legal arguments were not properly argued in lower courts first.

From The Associated Press

Court was considered the best hope to stop the removal of the tubes.

"It's judicial homicide. They want to murder her," her father, Robert Schindler, said Monday.

## Hutchinson quits homeland security post

WASHINGTON — A top Homeland Security Department official resigned his post Monday after he was passed over twice by the Bush administration to be secretary of the agency.

Undersecretary Asa Hutchinson, in charge of border and transportation security issues, submitted his letter of resignation to the White House early Monday morning, said a DHS official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the resignation had not yet been announced.

Hutchinson is a former Arkansas congressman and former federal drug czar who is believed to be considering a run for Arkansas governor next year. His resignation is expected to be effective March 1.

## Supporters pressing gay marriage ban

WASHINGTON — Senate supporters of a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage said Monday they intend to press for passage in the new Congress, brushing aside mixed signals from the White House on the issue's importance at the start of President Bush's second term.

"Who's to say whether we have enough votes or not," said Sen. Wayne Allard, R-Colo., noting that the new two-year Congress has just begun.

He said he expects GOP leaders to call for a vote before the 2006 elections and added, "I think it would be foolhardy to back off when we've got a good head of steam coming out of the election."

## Conn. judge delays man's execution

HARTFORD, Conn. — A federal judge said Monday he will order a postponement in the execution of serial killer Michael Ross, who waived his appeals and was set to be the first person put to death in New England in nearly 45 years.

Judge Robert N. Chatigny said he wants to hear more evidence about Ross' mental capacity.

"I think it is inevitable that I will be issuing a stay postponing an execution until the outcome of this proceeding," Chatigny said. He did not say how long the stay would last.

From The Associated Press

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# Northeast trying to dig out

BY THEO EMERY

The Associated Press

BOSTON — The city's airport partially reopened Monday but schools and courthouses were closed in many areas as the Northeast struggled to recover from the weekend's blizzard.

The roar of snowblowers and the scrape of shovels were heard as residents worked to free their sidewalks and cars from deep mounds of snow.

The storm dumped more than 3 feet of snow on Massachusetts, and drifts were piled up to the eaves of some one-story buildings.

Frustrated travelers waited for transportation after a weekend in which hundreds of airline flights were canceled.

Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney asked nonessential state workers in the eastern part of the state not to come to work, and Rhode Island Gov. Don Carcieri closed all state and municipal offices Monday. School closings were reported from Maine to parts of Virginia.

At least 15 deaths were linked to the weather: three in Connecticut, three in Ohio, three in Wisconsin, two in Pennsylvania, and one each in Maryland, Delaware, Iowa and Massachusetts.

## Social security overhaul

WASHINGTON — A key Senate Republican raised questions Sunday about President Bush's proposal for overhauling Social Security, underscoring the heavy political lifting the president faces in selling even members of his own party on his proposal to let younger workers pay a portion of their payroll taxes into private investment accounts.

Sen. Olympia Snowe of Maine, a self-described moderate Republican who sits on the Senate Finance Committee, said on CNN's "Inside Politics Sunday" that she was "certainly not going to support diverting \$2 trillion from Social Security into creating personal savings accounts" — a reference to concerns that such accounts would deep-

en the budget deficit.

"I don't object to personal savings accounts per se, but that's got to be a part of a larger retirement security picture, as one dimension," she said. "But the existing program, as it has been developed in the last 70 years, provides a stable monthly income that has prevented seniors, almost 50 percent, from falling into poverty. I don't think we want to erode the principles of that system."

The support of Snowe and other moderate Republicans will be critical if Bush's plan is to succeed.

States of emergency were declared in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Jersey.

On Massachusetts' Nantucket island, where an 84 mph wind gust was reported, the storm plunged the entire island into darkness until most service was restored Sunday night. The island's fire department worked to reach to reach people at risk, such as the elderly and the very young, in areas cut off by drifts up to 6 feet high.

"We just don't have the equip-

ment to handle that amount of snow," said Nantucket deputy fire chief Mark McDougall.

Two eastern Massachusetts communities — Salem and Plymouth — got 38 inches of snow each, according to the National Weather Service.

Parts of New Hampshire got 2 feet, New York's Catskills collected at least 20 inches and more than a foot fell in parts of New Jersey. Earlier, the weather system had piled a foot of snow across parts of Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and northern Ohio.



Chip Carbone uses a snowblower Monday to remove over two feet of snow from his sidewalk in Providence, R.I.

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## IN THE WORLD

## U.N. officials gather to recall liberation of Nazi death camps

BY WILLIAM J. KOLE  
The Associated Press

VIENNA, Austria — To the solemn strains of a choir, U.N. officials gathered in Vienna on Monday to kick off a week of events worldwide marking the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Nazi death camps.

Evoking images of the piles of human hair, eyeglasses and empty suitcases at Auschwitz, diplomats urged the international community to ensure the horrors of the Holocaust are never repeated.

Patrick Villemur, France's representative to U.N. organizations based in the Austrian capital, reminded about 200 officials and employees who gathered in the rotunda of the U.N. complex overlooking the Danube River that the United Nations was founded "as the world was awakening to the full horror of the camps."

Villemur urged nations to keep pulling together to ensure "there is never a repetition of these nightmares."

The Vienna gathering came ahead of a much-larger commemorative event later Monday at U.N. headquarters in New York, where Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor, are to address the General Assembly.

Grigory Berdennikov, Russia's permanent representative to the U.N. agencies in Vienna, recalled

how Soviet troops liberated Auschwitz 60 years ago this Thursday. The Nazis' slaughter of 6 million Jews, he said, "will remain in the world's memory as a horrific crime."

"Time will not diminish the meaning of their sacrifice," he said. "It is important to remember the lessons of history so it will not be repeated."

**"Time will not diminish the meaning of their sacrifice. It is important to remember the lessons of history so it will not be repeated."**

Grigory Berdennikov  
Russia's representative  
to U.N. agencies

Peter Redmond Jenkins, Britain's chief envoy in Vienna, described how he and his family visited Austria's notorious Mauthausen labor camp last summer so he could teach his young children about "one of the darkest stains on Europe's history."

Only by working together can the world hope to "stamp out genocide wherever it may occur," Jenkins said.

"Without constant vigilance, (death camps) could again be part of our future," U.S. diplomat David Noble warned.

"Let us ensure that Auschwitz and the other camps will remain a byword of history for the path humanity refuses to take," he said.

In a brief but emotional address, Israeli diplomat Michaeli said the Jewish state forever will bear the scars of the Holocaust, which he described as "the culmination of 1,500 years of anti-Semitism and hatred."

"Every generation must be on its guard to ensure such evil never happens again," he said.



Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, and Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko seen during a meeting in the Kremlin in Moscow on Monday. Yushchenko's visit aimed to smooth relations with the Kremlin.

## New Ukraine president visits Russia on first foreign trip

BY MARA D. BELLABY  
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — A day after taking office as Ukraine's president, Viktor Yushchenko arrived in Russia Monday to smooth relations with the Kremlin, which feared he would take his country out of Moscow's sphere of influence. But the reformist leader also named a fiery ally, whom Russia has been trying to arrest, as prime minister.

Yushchenko's visit to Moscow is a delicate balancing act to move closer to the West while not upsetting relations with his powerful neighbor — while for Russian President Vladimir Putin, the meeting could help undo the damage of his unsuccessful foray into Ukrainian politics.

As the two leaders sat down for

talks in the Kremlin, Yushchenko's office announced he had named Yulia Tymoshenko as Ukraine's new prime minister.

Russian prosecutors in September issued an international arrest warrant for Tymoshenko, a fiery orator and a key driving force behind massive opposition protests that paved the way for Yushchenko's victory in a repeat election last month.

Tymoshenko was accused of bribing Russian defense officials, and Moscow said she was put on the wanted list because she failed to turn up for questioning in Moscow. Tymoshenko claimed she hadn't received any summons, and said the charges against her were politically motivated.

During the Kremlin meeting, Yushchenko told Putin that "Russia is our eternal strategic partner."

"I will not conceal the fact that it was not an easy campaign," Yushchenko said of the presidential race in which Putin openly backed his rival, then prime minister Viktor Yanukovich.

While Yushchenko appeared reserved and at times nervous, Putin smiled and warmly received the new Ukrainian leader.

"We are very happy that this difficult political period in Ukraine has passed, and that a government is in place... and we expect that our relations will continue to develop," Putin said.

Russia views Ukraine as a key part of its historic sphere of influence, a major transit route for its oil and gas exports and a buffer between the expanding European Union and NATO. Moscow is nervous about Yushchenko's plans to quickly integrate the 48-million nation into Western structures.

## Iran says it will open production plant to process uranium ore concentrate

BY ALI AKBAR DAREINI  
The Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran will inaugurate a uranium ore concentrate production plant near the southern port city of Bandar Abbas within a year, Iran's nuclear chief said.

Gholamreza Aghazadeh was quoted by state-run radio on Sunday as saying the Bandar Abbas Yellowcake Production Plant would open during the next Iranian calendar year, which begins March 21.

The nuclear facility will process ore extracted from uranium mine into uranium ore concentrate,

known as yellowcake. The processing is part of the early stages before actual enrichment of uranium.

The uranium ore concentrate can then be processed into uranium hexafluoride, which later can be turned into a gas used as feedstock for enriching uranium.

Uranium enriched to low grades is used for fuel in nuclear reactors, but further enrichment makes it suitable for atomic bombs.

Under an agreement reached with France, Germany and Britain, which negotiated on behalf of the European Union, Iran will continue suspension of its enrichment

activities during negotiations with the Europeans about EU economic, political and technological aid. Iran has said it will decide within three months whether to continue suspension.

Israel will follow the U.S. lead in dealing with Iran's nuclear aspirations, Vice Premier Shimon Peres said Monday, but will not rule out military action if diplomatic and economic pressure fail to stop Tehran from developing nuclear weapons.

Meanwhile in London, the British government on Monday insisted diplomacy was the best way to solve the standoff over Iran's nuclear program, and rejected talk of tension with the United States.

## Palestinian militants tell Abbas they will halt attacks

The Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Militant groups have agreed to suspend attacks as they near a formal truce deal with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and await Israel's response, a senior Palestinian official said Monday.

The militants' promise came after Israeli leaders said Sunday that Israel is ready to hold its fire if calm prevails, moving the two sides closer to ending four years of bloody conflict.

Israeli President Moshe Katsav, who holds a largely ceremonial post, called Abbas on Monday, Katsav's office said. The two leaders talked about the importance of working together for peace, a statement said.

U.S. envoy William Burns, a senior State Department official, is to arrive in the region later this week for talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders on the emerging cease-fire deal. Abbas is seeking Israeli guarantees that it will halt military operations, including arrest raids and targeted killings of militants.

Israel, in the past, has refused to grant amnesty to militants, but appeared to be softening its position. Assaf Shariv, an adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, said Israel would not make public declarations. "It will be a de facto cease-fire," he said.

"If there is quiet, we will respond with quiet."







## OPINION

# Sunnis don't want minority rule blown up

BY ROBERT ZELNICK

Every time I hear advocates for Iraq's Sunni Muslims urge postponement of the Jan. 30 vote, I recall legendary lawyer Louis Nizer's story about dissenting members of a corporate board of directors who, after tossing their colleagues out the window, promptly moved to adjourn for the absence of a quorum.

The Sunnis have reason to be unhappy. For nearly a century under the assortment of kings and cutthroats that ran Baghdad, they dominated Iraq. The Shiites in the South outnumbered them nearly 3 to 1 and the Kurds in the north were their numerical equal. But Sunnis dominated the government, the military, the police, higher education, business and the Baath political party. Moreover, when Saddam Hussein chased the starving and frozen Kurds to the mountains of Turkey and turned his southern guns on the Shiites, killing 300,000 of them, the Sunnis were not at risk. In a democratic society, or even one with rough representative government, their influence would more reflect their numbers.

Small wonder that military and political insurgents, not to mention the terrorists who rob car bombs into crowded markets, massacre police trainees and slit the throats of aid dispensers, have come mainly from the ranks of Sunnis about to see political power redistributed. Small wonder their four prov-

inces are the least secure among Iraq's eighteen.

The arguments for delaying the vote are not entirely frivolous.

Mainstream Sunni political and religious leaders say they need time for things to settle down. Their voices are augmented by a sprinkling of Americans who see the risk of greater violence, even civil war, if the Sunnis are dealt substantially out of the game. Hold off the elections, they urge. Revise the voting formula to ensure representation from the Sunni geographic regions. Then hold a vote.

But postponement carries even greater risks. One is the awful precedent of rewarding terrorism. Scuttle an election because of insurgent treachery and the likely result would be more, not less treachery. This is a volatile area where limiting the plebiscite to those of saintly disposition would be futile. But as we have seen recently in the case of the Palestinians, a minimal commitment to shun violence is a fair price to pay for participation in the political process. One must choose between the ballot and the gun.

An even greater danger would be delivering a political insult of devastating proportion to Iraq's Shiites. If Sunni violence can delay majority rule, then Shiites might conclude that their own violence can restore it. And a Shiite-Sunni clash would provide all kinds of opportunities for mischief to Iran, the neighboring Shiite power.

Fair better to hold the scheduled elections



for the 275-member legislature charged with drafting a constitution, and reach out to the Sunnis through that body. Some might be brought immediately into government. The constitution can be tailored to protect regional as well as religious representational interests, just as women are guaranteed 20 percent of the seats in the new legislature.

Dissenters ask whether an election where some can't vote can pass the test of international legitimacy. Which brings us back to Nizer and his quorum call.

Robert Zelnick is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, a Stanford, Calif.-based think tank, and chairman of the Department of Journalism at Boston University.

# Nixed bombing of Auschwitz could have saved lives

BY STEPHEN J. SOLARZ  
AND RAFAEL MEDOFF

PHILADELPHIA

World leaders will gather at Auschwitz, site of the former Nazi death camp, tomorrow to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Allies' liberation of the camp.

The event will help focus needed attention on the horrors of genocide, then and now. But it will be haunted by the knowledge that, in 1944, Allied bomber pilots had Auschwitz within their gun sights, yet were never given the order to attack.

George McGovern was one of those pilots. McGovern, the former U.S. senator from South Dakota and 1972 Democratic presidential nominee, recently spoke on camera for the first time about his experiences as one of the American pilots who flew over Auschwitz.

In a meeting with interviewers from Israel Television and the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, McGovern recalled his days as the pilot of a B-24 Liberator in the 45th Bomb Group, targeting German synthetic oil plants in occupied Poland. Many of them within a few miles of the Auschwitz gas chambers.

After the Allies gained control of Foggia Air Base in Italy in December 1943, Auschwitz was for the first time within striking distance of Allied planes.

In June 1944, U.S. diplomats and Jewish leaders in Switzerland received a detailed report about Auschwitz, prepared by two escapees. They described the mass-murder facilities, and drew diagrams showing where the gas chambers and crematoria were located.

As a result, Jewish organizations repeatedly asked the Roosevelt administration to order the bombing of Auschwitz and the railroad lines leading to the camp.

The War Department rejected the proposals as "impracticable," claiming such raids would require "considerable diver-

sion" of planes needed for the war effort. U.S. officials claimed to have conducted a "study" that found that bombing Auschwitz was not militarily feasible. But no evidence of the alleged study has ever been found.

Ironically, military resources were diverted for various other nonmilitary reasons. Secretary of War Henry Stimson blocked the Air Force's plan to bomb the Japanese city of Kyoto, because of the city's artistic treasures, and his deputy, John McCloy — who rebuffed many of the requests to bomb Auschwitz — diverted U.S. bombers from striking the German city of Rothenburg because of its famous medieval architecture. Gen. George Patton even diverted U.S. troops to rescue 150 Lipizzan horses in Austria.

The administration's "diversion" argument was just a "rationalization," McGovern said in the interview. How much of a "rationalization" would it have been, when he and other U.S. bomber-pilots already were flying over the area? In the summer and

fall of 1944, the Allies repeatedly bombed the oil refineries near Auschwitz — at a time when hundreds of Jews were being gassed daily in the camp.

On Dec. 26, for instance, McGovern's squadron dropped 50 tons of bombs on oil facilities in Monowitz, an industrial section of Auschwitz, located less than five miles from the site where 1.6 million people were murdered from 1942 to 1944.

"There is no question we should have attempted ... to go after Auschwitz," McGovern said. "There was a pretty good chance we could have blasted those rail lines off the face of the earth, which would have interrupted the flow of people to those death chambers, and we had a pretty good chance of knocking out those gas ovens."

Even if there was a danger of accidentally harming some of the prisoners, "it was certainly worth the effort, despite all the risks," he noted, because the prisoners were already "doomed to death" and an Allied bombing attack might have slowed down the mass-murder process and saved many more lives.

"Franklin Roosevelt was a great man and he was my political hero," McGovern said. "But I think he made two great mistakes in World War II."

"One was the internment of Japanese-Americans," he said, and the other was the decision "not to go after Auschwitz. ... God forgive us for that tragic miscalculation."

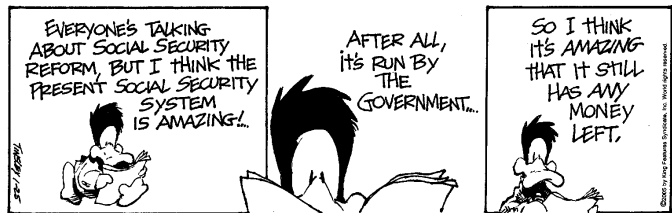
One hopes the world leaders meeting at the Auschwitz site this week will reflect not only upon the savagery of the Nazis, but also on the role of bystanders, then and now.

As McGovern emphasized, the Auschwitz experience should produce "a determination that never again will we fail to exercise the full capacity of our strength in that direction ... we should have gone all out against Auschwitz, and we must never again permit genocide."

Stephen J. Solarz, a New York Democrat, served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1975 to 1983. Rafael Medoff is director of The David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, which focuses on issues related to America's response to the Holocaust.

## Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY





## Quick Trips

# A hard-won fortress

## French citadel survived lengthy siege

BY PETER JAEGER  
Stars and Stripes

"Son of a Bitch." If he had known the famous American phrase, Col. Kohlermann might have used it for sure.

Kohlermann, whose first name is unknown and apparently lost to history, was commander of Bavarian troops surrounding the French town of Bitche during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. He would have used the famous phrase to curse Louis Casimir Teysier, stubborn commander of La Citadelle, the mighty fortress overlooking Bitche in northeastern Lorraine.

Teysier didn't give up, he didn't surrender his hard-hit fortress on top of a huge rock to the German troops. Under siege between August 1870 and March 1871, Bitche and its stronghold withstood bombardments and attacks by 20,000 Bavarian troops for eight months.

While the walls and buildings atop the rock were transformed into rubble by Bavarian artillery, life went on in the tunnels and casemates inside the rock. Equipped with strongholds and shelters, kitchen and stables, hospital and mess halls, served with water from a well 240 feet deep into the rock, Teysier and his garrison withstood all attacks. They even held out for three weeks in March 1871, after Germany had defeated France and an armistice was signed.

"I need to get the word from Paris to surrender," Teysier declared.

On March 26, 1871, Teysier handed over the keys of the fortress to Kohlermann and earned an honorable retreat with the survivors of his garrison.

Today in Bitche, one can soak up the atmosphere of a fortress under siege. The Citadelle de France is a well-organized museum open to the public. With light and sound, music and slide shows, the old days of the Franco-Prussian war are brought to life. Along with the sounds of marching boots and the fanfare of attack, you almost smell the black powder and hear the screams of the wounded.

Earphones (English, French and German languages available) guide you through the fortress and through the centuries. Not only can visitors sample the famous siege of 1870-71,



PHOTOS BY PETER JAEGER/Stars and Stripes

The Citadelle, one of the mightiest fortresses of France, dominates the town of Bitche in eastern Lorraine.



Above: A model in the museum shows the location and dimensions of the fortress of Bitche, which is built on a massive rock.

Below: A decorative pillow in the museum shows the crest of Bitche with two war medals.



but also the history of the Citadelle, from its creation under French architect Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban in the 17th century until the end of World War II.

A plaque on top of the fortress

honors the fallen and injured American soldiers of the 100th

Division of the Seventh Army that liberated Bitche on March 15, 1945.

Another museum on top of the fortress offers interesting relics of the wars and a fantastic model of the Citadelle dominating the town of Bitche.

E-mail: Peter Jaeger  
astripes@ed.mil



A bust of Napoleon III, emperor of France, in the museum of the fortress. As commander in chief of the French troops in the 1870-71 Franco-Prussian war, he was captured by the Germans at Sedan, France, in 1871.



PETER JAEGER/Stars and Stripes

## On the QT



### Directions

Bitche is in the northeastern part of the Lorraine region of France, close to the German border, 15 miles south of Zweibrücken.

From Kaiserslautern/Ramstein take Autobahn 6 to autobahn kreuz Neunkirchen onto Autobahn 8, direction Zweibrücken. Leave the autobahn at Exit 33 toward Hornbach and follow Highway B-424 to the French border. B-424 becomes D55A in France. Follow signs to Bitche, just 13 miles away.

From Heidelberg, take Autobahn 5, direction Basel; switch at kreuz Walldorf to Autobahn 6 direction Mannheim. At dreieck Hockenheim go onto Autobahn 61 direction Köln; switch to Autobahn 65 at kreuz Mutterstadt. Leave Autobahn 65 at Exit 15/ Landau Nord. Go onto Highway B-10 direction Annweiler/Pirmasens. At Pirmasens switch onto Autobahn 8. Leave the autobahn at Exit 33 onto Highway B-424, direction Hornbach and Bitche. If there are controls at the German-French border, you will need a passport.



### Times

La Citadelle is open from March 15 to Nov. 15 every day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (July and August until 6 p.m.) The visit takes 1 to 2 hours.



### Costs

Admission (including headphones) is 6 euros (7 euros from May 1 until Sept. 30) and 5 euros for children and students (6 euros from May-September).



### Food

There is a snack bar with outdoor café on top of the fortress next to the museum. Bitche has a number of restaurants, cafés and two supermarkets to buy food and drinks for a picnic.



### Information

For info about La Citadelle, call the tourist office (Mon. through Sat., 9 a.m.-noon and 1:30-5:30 p.m.) at Bitche, located at the parking lot of the fortress. Phone: (+33) (0) 387061616, fax: (+33) (0) 387061617, e-mail: Office.tourisme.bitche@wanadoo.fr.

- PETER JAEGER

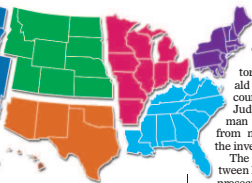




## Wrongful death

**MA** SPRINGFIELD — The family of an 11-year-old West Springfield boy who fell to his death while climbing a factory smokestack more than two years ago was awarded \$6.5 million by a Superior Court Judge in a wrongful death lawsuit.

Paul H. Rothschild, a Springfield lawyer representing the family of Andrew J. Mann, said that the judgment was against the trustees of the West Springfield Trade Center Condominium Trust, CCS Enterprises. The trade center controls the property where the smokestack was located on Western Avenue.



## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Sewage spill in paradise

**HI** PEARL CITY — About 2.3 million gallons of sewage spilled from the Pearl City wastewater pumping station, damaging several homes when sewage backed up inside them.

Crews didn't manage to stop the flow until more than six hours after the spill began. They continued to clean up the mess the next day.

Athan Adachi, chief of the city's wastewater division, said improvements were being made at the pump station when a contractor opened a pressurized sewage pipe, causing the spill.

"The pipe broke loose and the sewage started coming out," Adachi said. "They couldn't shut it down and the whole area started to flood with sewage."

The pipe was opened because of a miscommunication between the contractor and a worker at the plant, he said.

### Rape charges dropped

**LA** LEESVILLE — A man won't face trial on charges he raped three residents of a short-term home for the mentally handicapped because his accusers were found incompetent to testify against him.

Prosecutors dropped six aggravated rape charges against Louis Glenn Dowden, who was a resident training specialist at the Leesville Developmental Center.

Prosecutors said the case rested largely on the victims' testimony and the judge ruled them incompetent to testify following a two-day hearing. The victims all have IQs under 70.

Dowden was arrested in March 2002 after state officials began investigating the rape allegations. He was also put on administrative leave by the state.

### Awarded for generosity

**MT** LIMA — Eight high school students who gave their senior class trip money to a teacher with cancer will be able to travel after all, thanks to donations from people who were touched by the students' generosity.

The eight graduating seniors at Lima High School in southwest Montana gave \$5,000 in December to Karla McGraw, a teacher and volleyball coach diagnosed with advanced breast cancer, to help her with medical expenses.

When Lima resident Ben Yarbrough heard about the stu-

dents' donation, he set up a fund that has since grown to more than \$8,300, thanks to donations from as far away as Florida and New York City.

### Six injured in fire

**NY** NEW YORK — An early morning fire in the middle of blizzard conditions left six people with minor injuries in Staten Island.

Firefighters responded to the blaze at about 2:30 a.m. at a six-story apartment on Park Hill Avenue, said Firefighter Paul Iannizzotto, a fire department spokesman.

About 35 units and 150 firefighters were called to the fire.

The fire started on the first floor and extended through the building. Firefighters were able to put the flames out after about an hour. The cause of the fire has not been determined yet.

Six residents of the apartment suffered minor injuries. Three of them were taken to Staten Island University Hospital North for treatment.

### Misconduct alleged

**IL** CHICAGO — A judge accused a federal prosecutor of misconduct for turning grand jury materials over to a plaintiff's lawyer in a hospital-fraud case, sparking a dispute that has led to

an investigation of several lawyers in the U.S. attorney's office, court records show.

In response, U.S. Attorney Patrick J. Fitzgerald asked a federal appeals court to force U.S. District Judge James F. Holderman to disqualify himself from making rulings during the investigation.

The monthslong feud between Holderman and federal prosecutors was made public when hundreds of pages of court papers were unsealed.

### Defending polygamy

**UT** SALT LAKE CITY — A Republican state lawmaker countered a Senate colleague's dispersal of an anti-polygamy book by passing out materials to fellow legislators defending the practice as natural and not necessarily harmful.

State Sen. Carlene Walker said she was offended by the book, "God's Brothel," that Democratic Senate Minority Whip Ron Allen distributed to legislators.

Walker said she has known polygamists who are "fine, honest, educated, wonderful people."

### Welfare workers fired

**FL** TAMPA — Two child welfare workers were fired and a third was demoted after a 4-month-old child under their supervision was beaten to death, authorities said.

Phoenix Jordan Parrish died in Dothan, Ala., after his mother banged his head against a bed to stop him from crying, authorities said.

Tierra Capri Gobble, 21, had been ordered by a court to stay away from the child.

Hillsborough Kids Inc., a private agency that handles foster care and adoption for the state of Florida, said the three employees failed to monitor the child after he was taken out of state by his great-uncle, Edgar Parrish. The workers were not identified.

### Bronze swords stolen

**PA** HARRISBURG — The National Park Service is looking for two bronze swords stolen from monuments at Gettysburg National Military Park, officials said.

The first sword was reported missing Sept. 15 from the bronze Alexander Hays sculpture and the latest was believed to have been taken recently from the 8th Pennsylvania Cavalry stone monument, the service said.

Both were pried or broken off the monuments, Park Service spokeswoman Katie Lawton said.

### Sheriff's deputy indicted

**FL** TAMPA — A sheriff's deputy was indicted on charges that he used a police computer to track a friend's former lover and her new boyfriend before attacks were carried out against the couple.

Deputy Charles Maye allegedly used his access to the National Crime Information Center's database to help his friend Leroy Collins track down James McLennan, the new boyfriend of Collins' ex-girlfriend. Prosecutors say he also used the computer to find the girlfriend's address.



### Slippery perch

A bald eagle carefully walks on an iced-over pipe on a circle irrigation system near Klamath Falls, Ore.

A bald eagle carefully walks on an iced-over pipe on a circle irrigation system near Klamath Falls, Ore.



### Come sail away

With spinnaker billowing, Farr 40-class boats sail on a downwind track during the Key West 2005 regatta off Key West, Fla.



### Winter wonderland

Hugo Day, 3, gets taken for a ride by Tessa Muehlechner during the snowy weather in Washington.



Midshipmen throw snowballs while playing in the snow in downtown Annapolis, Md.

## Snowball fight



Jeff Snodgrass shows how he can use suction to stick five soda cans to his face during an audition for The Late Show's Stupid Human Tricks held at the Omplex in Oklahoma City.

## Stupid human tricks



Children eat ice cream in Hattiesburg, Miss., as part of a lesson on the letter "I" given at the Early Encounters preschool. From left, Will Bustin, 4; Dillon Morgan, 4; Walker Matlich, 5; Austin Baker, 5; Caden Stowall, 5; and Payton Brewer, 5.

## Tasty lesson

## Two die in plane crash

**TX** ABILENE — Two Dallas men died when their single-engine airplane clipped a power line and crashed near Brownwood.

Paulose Mathai, 50, and Karl Robert Brinker, 28, were flying from Dallas and approaching Brownwood Regional Airport when the crash occurred about 7 a.m., according to the Department of Public Safety in Brownwood.

The men were in a Beech 36 model, single-engine plane when the landing gear clipped a power line, a DPS spokeswoman said. The plane hit a group of standing trees, the left wing broke off and the aircraft burst into flames, The Abilene Reporter-News reported.

## Airport expansion

**VA** RESTON — A Reston-based developer who has fought the multibillion-dollar plan to extend Metrolink to Dulles International Airport has offered his own proposal to ease northern Virginia's transportation woes.

Under his plan, Chris Walker said his company would widen Interstate 66 and the Dulles Toll Road between Washington and the airport — a congested 27-mile route.

Walker said he would pay for the project by charging a toll that would vary with the time of day on some of the lanes. Other lanes would be free, which means drivers willing to pay would save time by traveling in the restricted lanes with fewer cars.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is considering three similar proposals from private businesses for stretches of the Capital Beltway and Interstate 95.

## Taking on obesity

**ME** PORTLAND — Obesity will be one of the issues on the Legislature's agenda now that lawmakers have passed a tax relief bill.

Lawmakers will consider bills to require chain restaurants to list calories on menus; have schools give parents confidential reports on their child's body fat; and stop teachers from using junk food to reward students.

With obesity on the rise in Maine, supporters of the bills say it's time to address poor nutrition and lack of physical activity.

Obesity has grown 20 percent over the last decade, with more than half of Maine adults overweight or obese and nearly 30 percent of high schoolers overweight or at risk of becoming so.

If current trends continue, obesity will overtake tobacco as the leading cause of preventable death, health experts say.

## Airport inspections

**HI** HONOLULU — The state Department of Transportation will use \$447,768 from the airport special fund to inspect airfields and to update pavement management systems plans for 14 airports throughout the state.

The federal government's share for the project is \$2.5 million, according to state officials, who said Gov. Linda Lingle had released the state money.

Data collected from the inspec-

tions will be used to formulate new short- and long-term plans to maintain and upgrade airfields, the governor's office said.

The inspections are required every three years by the Federal Aviation Administration to determine the amount of federal funding for airfield pavement rehabilitation projects, officials said.

"This important preventative effort, which uses airport special funds and federal dollars, will help in our ongoing plan to improve the airport infrastructure on all islands," DOT Director Rod Haraga said.

## Missing hard drive

**CO** GREELEY — A computer hard drive missing from the University of Northern Colorado contained personal information about thousands of employees and their families, the university has said.

UNC officials said the missing equipment includes the names, birth dates, Social Security and bank account numbers and other information about employees' beneficiaries as well as about 15,790 current and former workers.

The total could be more than 30,000 people, officials said.

University officials said they do not know whether the drive was misplaced or stolen, but campus police have launched a criminal investigation.

## Four-alarm blaze

**NH** CANTERBURY — Firefighters from about a dozen communities worked in frigid temperatures to control a four-alarm fire triggered by a gasoline vapor explosion in a sod farm workshop.

The fire broke out at the Gold Star Farm around 2 p.m., and about 60 firefighters from as far away as Northwood were called to the scene. The fire was contained in about an hour, and it was declared under control just before 5 p.m.

Mutual Aid Fire Chief Richard Wright said the fire destroyed perhaps a quarter to a third of a sprawling storage building that contained equipment and chemicals, including pesticides.

"Basically, we probably saved three-quarters of the building," he said. "We were able to cut it off inside the building."

## Boy reunited with family

**FL** OCALA — An 11-year-old boy who had been taken from his school by a convicted child molester was reunited with his family while dozens of police searched for the kidnapping suspect in Georgia.

The boy was hugged by his mother as he emerged from a police car outside the Marion County sheriff's office.

His father, Ivert Kirkirk, said the boy was surprised by all the attention and looked good after the ordeal. "He said, 'Dad, stop crying,'" Kirkirk said.

Meanwhile, police continued searching for Frederick Fretz, 42, who was believed to be hiding in woods near where the boy was found in northern Georgia, said Maj. Mike Powell of the police department in Emerson, Ga. Powell said there was no indication the boy had been molested.

Stories and photos from wire services



## AFRTS Television Schedule

Updated sports listings are available on the first Scoreboard page in the sports section or AFN's Web site at <http://myafn.dodmedia.osd.mil>



## FACES

## Reaction takes Alda by surprise

Alan Alda says he's constantly approached by people surprised at his portrayal of a conservative Republican senator on the TV show "The West Wing."



Alda

"I was never asked that when I played a murderer," Alda said.

The NBC drama is setting up a long-running story line in which Alda will run for president against a Democrat portrayed by Jimmy Smits. The winner will be inaugurated on "The West Wing" a year from now.

John Wells, the show's executive producer, said it was not been decided who will win. He said the show will resist an interactive game in which viewers decide the winner because the production schedule needs to be set too far in advance.

## eBay sale to aid tsunami victims

Celebrities including actress Eva Longoria and singer Avril Lavigne will auction off personal items on eBay to raise money for survivors of the South Asian tsunami.

Beginning Feb. 7, 40 items will hit the Web site, including "Desperate Housewives" co-star Longoria's cheerleading uniform and a signed skateboard from rocker Lavigne.

The drive, with proceeds going to Save the Children's Asia Earthquake/Tsunami Relief Fund, is sponsored by *Us Weekly* magazine.

The eBay auction will end Feb. 24.

## Golden girl goes buff

Betty White — yes, that Betty White — goes flesh-toned for a scene in her new TV movie.

During the filming of the Hallmark Channel original movie "Annie's Point," White, 83, and costar Amy Davidson went bare, sort of, for a grandmother-granddaughter skin-dipping scene.

"We were not method acting," White said in a statement.

"We had little strapless bathing suits on. I mean, we can act like we're naked."



White

## 'Sex' star falls into the Gap — again

Actress Sarah Jessica Parker is falling into more Gap advertisements.

The former "Sex and the City" star has signed on to represent the clothing chain in its spring 2005 marketing campaign — the third straight in which she's been involved. Her spots premier sometime in March.

"I think the Gap is terrifically creative and inspired," said Parker in a statement. "Women will love the clothes for spring."

The campaign will encompass more television and print ads, direct mail and online and in-store marketing elements.

In a previous Gap ad, a cast of digitally altered Parker clones tromped around rock star Lenny Kravitz. In another, Parker paraded with actor Josh Duhamel and R&B singer Mary J. Blige.



Parker

## Grammer considers a role in politics

Kelsey Grammer has an eye toward politics, but right now he's focused on helping his ailing wife.

His wife, former Playmate model Camille Donatucci, picked up a parasite last year in Italy, said Grammer, who was in Washington for a recent inaugural event.

"My wife was very ill over the summer and we're still kind of recouping her health," Grammer told AP Radio.

The 49-year-old actor said he's considering running for political office one day. "I come from a family that is traditionally in service. I've always felt an obligation to spend some time in service to the country."

Will Grammer be on the ballot soon? Not likely.

Grammer, who starred on the popular NBC comedy series "Frasier," says he won't run until "no one really thinks I'm doing it because I'm out of an acting job. The truth is, it would probably be easily another decade, maybe 20 (years)."

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

# Bankable Ben

## Stiller's charismatic qualities put him among elite performers at the box office

By ROBERT W. WELKOS

Los Angeles Times

HOLLYWOOD

It's a chilly weekday evening at the Lakewood Center mall's Pacific Theatres megaplex, situated in a slice of Southern California suburbia, and people are trickling up to the box office window to purchase tickets for the season's blockbuster comedy, Universal Pictures' "Meet the Fockers."

The movie, which as of Sunday had grossed more than \$240 million after five weeks in domestic release, features an all-star cast — including Robert De Niro, Dustin Hoffman and Barbra Streisand — but one of the film's major draws is the 39-year-old, curly-haired Ben Stiller, who has emerged as a box-office powerhouse.

For the last year, Stiller has been on a roll. Besides "Meet the Fockers," the sequel to 2000's hit comedy "Meet the Parents," Stiller starred in three other successful films in 2004 — "DodgeBall: A True Underdog Story," which ranked in \$114.3 million in domestic ticket sales; "Starsky & Hutch," which grossed \$88.2 million domestically; and "Along Came Polly," which took in \$88.1 million domestically. That steady box-office clout has elevated Stiller's paycheck to about \$15 million per picture.

But defining Stiller's appeal isn't easy, even for his audience.

"It just seems like he makes movies out of ordinary stuff," said Jay Rocc, 23, of South Gate, standing near the Lakewood theater's ticket window.

"Like, who's going to make a movie out of dodge ball?" he chuckled.

"Ben Stiller."

Anna Rice, 46, of Long Beach, who also was heading into the theater to see "Meet the Fockers," recalled an earlier Stiller comedy she liked called "Zoolander," in which he played Derek Zoolander, a vacuous male supermodel known for his patented "look." Blue Steel.

"I know it was corny, but I thought he was very good in it," Rice said. "He is definitely marketable. How can you pinpoint it? Some people have it and some don't."

Oscar-winner Hoffman, who plays the film's spirited father-in-law in "Meet the Fockers," said what impressed him about Stiller was that he wasn't looking for the laugh much as the irony of a situation.

"There's a great danger [in actors] trying to get the laugh," Hoffman said.

"If you are in a scene with him, you could not wish to be with a better foil," Hoffman said. "He will set you up. It's like basketball. He doesn't take every shot, like some basketball players we know. He'll pass you the ball because he's interested in the scene."

Hoffman said it also surprised him to discover Stiller had an actor's sensibility rather than a performer's.

"Usually, people who come from comedy tend to perform the part rather than act it," Hoffman said.

"There is a difference. But I [real-

ized after working with him that] he came from an acting base. The reason is, he was never satisfied, which is kind of a core ingredient to being a good actor."

Owen Wilson — who has worked with Stiller on such films as "The Cable Guy," "The Royal Tenenbaums" and "Meet the Parents," and has a small role in "Meet the Fockers" — said audiences were introduced to Stiller's brand of humor more than a decade ago when Stiller had a comedy show on MTV and later signed with Fox, which aired "The Ben Stiller Show" in the 1992-93 television season.

"I think people sort of began catching on to his humor with his [Fox] show," Wilson said. "It didn't have a big audience, but it developed sort of a cult following. And I think he sort of built on that to where people kind of caught up with him."

Stiller doesn't rely on stand-up routines to make people laugh, Wilson said.

"He couldn't be further from a class clown or somebody who is on all the time," Wilson said. "That's not Ben, and that's not his brand of humor."

Jim Carrey, Will Ferrell and Adam Sandler may have bigger marquee names, but Stiller's box-office appeal is growing. It now reaches beyond U.S. shores, where American comedy doesn't easily translate with foreign audiences. As evidence, The Wall Street Journal recently reported that Stiller's blockbuster "Meet the Parents," took in 49.7 percent, or \$164.2 million, of its total ticket sales abroad, while last year's "Along Came Polly" garnered 48.5 percent, or \$83 million, in foreign markets.

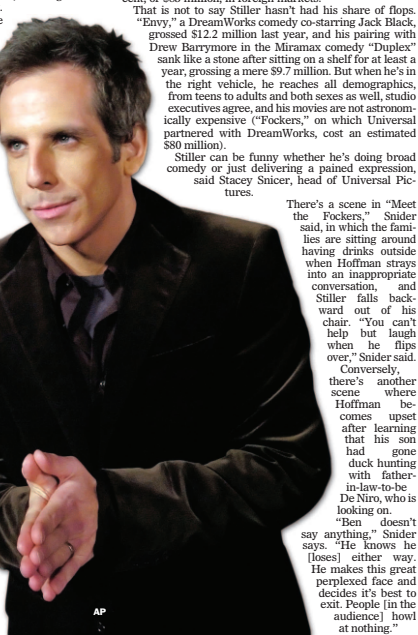
That is not to say Stiller hasn't had his share of flops. "Envy," a DreamWorks comedy co-starring Jack Black, grossed \$12.2 million last year, and his pairing with Drew Barrymore in the Miramax comedy "Duplex" sank like a stone after sitting on a shelf for at least a year, grossing a mere \$9.7 million. But when he's in the right vehicle, he reaches all demographics, from teens to adults and both sexes as well, studio executives agree, and his movies are not astronomically expensive ("Fockers," on which Universal partnered with DreamWorks, cost an estimated \$80 million).

Stiller can be funny whether he's doing broad comedy or just delivering a pained expression, said Stacey Snider, head of Universal Pictures.

There's a scene in "Meet the Fockers," Snider said, in which the families are sitting around a table having drinks outside when Hoffman strays into an inappropriate conversation, and Stiller falls backward out of his chair. "You can't help but laugh when he flips over," Snider said.

Conversely, there's another scene where Hoffman becomes upset after learning that his son had gone duck hunting with father-in-law-to-be De Niro, who is looking on.

"Ben" doesn't say anything," Snider says. "He knows he [loses] either way. He makes this great perplexed face and decides it's best to exit. People [in the audience] howl at nothing."



AP

# Horoscope

The full moon in creative Leo cheers on the spirit of play. One definition for the word "creative" comes from the Encarta World Dictionary: making imaginative use of limited resources available. Keep in mind that it's the limits that give us the impetus to imagine and bring new solutions into existence. The full moon pours forth possibilities.

## TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

**(January 25).** The thing or person you're waiting for is waiting for you, too. So stop waiting, and get active in your pursuit now! The next six weeks bring impressive progress in your personal life and put a sheen on your social connections. Adding one terrific person — possibly a Capricorn or Aries — to your circle will open an entire world of adventure.

## ARIES (March 21-April 19).

You rank — it's obvious to everyone around you. There's a man in your realm who desperately wants your respect. You may have to walk cautiously through his place to avoid stepping on the names he'll drop.

## TAURUS (April 20-May 20).

The social arena begs for your input. You have something magical to add. You'll need fodder to start the conversation, though, so delve into the day's headlines for some icebreakers. A new love is in the crowd.

## GEMINI (May 21-June 21).

Friends could mistake you for their therapist. At a certain point, you have to draw the line, or your energy is sucked into the void of unsolvable problems (only because some problems are not yours to solve).

## CANCER (June 22-July 22).

Loved ones require your understanding more than ever. So what if you feel under-rehearsed or out of your league? Don't let fear stop you. You can deliver the goods exactly as needed.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Someone is putting on a performance meant to impress you or win your

business. You'll probably be overwhelmed by your experience, but you can see the potential for growth there, too.

## VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).

You may feel alone on your path, but you're not. You've got key people on your side. What you know, you know well. You'll find love while learning about what you don't know.

## LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).

The puzzles you face today are exactly the kind you usually figure out quickly — except these problems have no foreseeable solution, and you must act on faith. Accept that frustration is a normal part of business.

## SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).

The one you're interested in will never know unless you make a noticeable effort. Be funny. Risk being embarrassed. Tonight, quality family time makes you feel centered, connected and whole.

## SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).

You understand the importance of building and maintaining your own life. You know better than to look to someone else to provide it for you. As the song goes, "God bless the child that's got his own."

## CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).

Concern about doing the wrong thing will undermine the integrity of your creative life. Be bold, even outrageous. You'll be happy later that you played by your own rules.

## AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).

All things seem possible, even the impossible ones. You don't mind at all that love relationships ebb and flow; respect is what you're after, and you get it by giving it. Sagittarius is favored for love.

## PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).

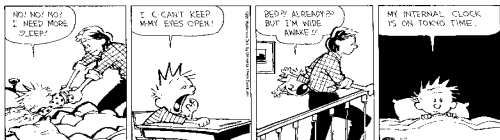
Killer of career choices involve more than doing what you think will move you up the ladder. Delivering something totally unique is the secret to success. If others are already doing it, you should.

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## Holiday Mathis



## Calvin and Hobbes



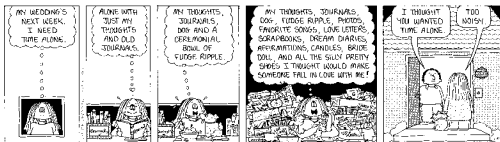
## Jump Start



## Zits



## Cathy



## Hi and Lois



## Beetle Bailey



## Red Rover



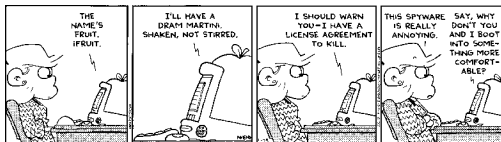
## Better or Worse



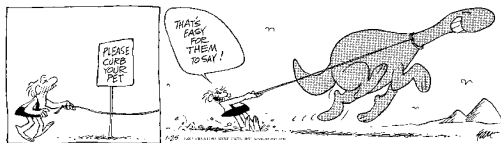
## Peanuts



Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



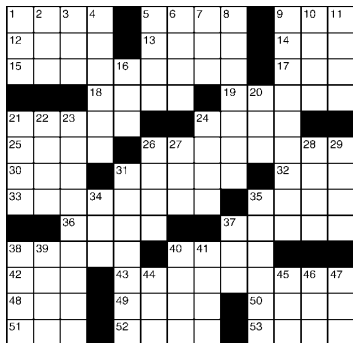
Hagar



Garfield



# Eugene Sheffer Crossword



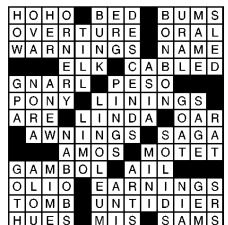
## Across

- 1 News article
- 5 Tel —
- 9 Pirouette pivot
- 12 Guy
- 13 Old Italian bread
- 14 In need of repair
- 15 Sweaters without buttons
- 17 Peruke
- 18 Spring event
- 19 California resort lake
- 21 Fills fully
- 24 Give the ax
- 25 Earsplitting
- 26 Sweet-smelling
- 30 Director Lee
- 31 Conflagration
- 32 Pair
- 33 Pattern
- 35 Raised ridge
- 36 Masticate
- 37 Big dipper?
- 38 Sadat's co-Nobelist
- 40 Have on
- 42 Melody
- 43 Broad-winged insect
- 48 Support system?
- 49 13-Across' replacement
- 50 Ontario neighbor
- 51 Archery-bow wood
- 52 Agents, for short
- 53 They're often connected

## Down

- 1 Devil
- 2 Greek cross
- 3 Right angle
- 4 Dissolved
- 5 Part of T.A.E.
- 6 Talk show, with "The"
- 7 Like some vhs.
- 8 Trace
- 9 Blond
- 10 Hodgepodge
- 11 Advantage
- 16 Reactions of surprise
- 20 Timetable
- 21 Venetian blind
- 22 Top-notch
- 23 Ballplayer, father-in-law of Faith Hill
- 24 Discontent
- 25 Imperfection
- 27 Muppet Rizzo, e.g.
- 28 Zorro
- 29 Carry
- 31 Kitchen appliance
- 34 — Beta Kappa
- 35 Cautioned
- 37 "7 Faces of Dr. —"
- 38 Infant
- 39 Green acres
- 40 Distortion
- 41 Hollywood clashers
- 44 Sara of "Less Than Perfect"
- 45 To and —
- 46 Ignited
- 47 "Undeniably"

## Answer to Previous Puzzle



**1-25 CRYPTOQUIP**

QO WEDKIA: ELJ'Z CLFE

FLUA ICWJVA WMLTJE

DAJEKJV QWICKJAU. ZCAO

WMA ILKJKDLMLTU.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AT SOME SEASIDE RESTAURANTS, THE BATHROOM DOORS MIGHT SAY "BUOYS" AND "GULLS."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals O

# Ways to support a grieving mother

**Dear Abby:** "Caring Friend in California" was at a loss about whether to hold a baby shower for her friend, whose baby wasn't expected to make it through the gestation period. You advised her that rather than hold a shower, her friends should stay close and provide willing ears and shoulders to cry on.

A dear friend of my daughter's faced the same circumstances. We knew that if her baby survived delivery, it would be only a short time until the child was gone. What we did was to create a "memory box." We included a camera to take pictures of the baby, and a smaller version of a baby book to hold the footprints, hand prints, a lock of hair and, of course, the photos. We also bought the infant a cross as she was immediately baptized.

It gave the parents something

to remember — a special memory of their baby. It wouldn't hurt for "Caring Friend" to contact the hospital as well, as it may have something already set up for people facing these circumstances.

**Dear Abby**



— **Hope in Minnesota**  
Dear Hope: Those are wonderful suggestions. A woman named Michelle wrote me from Las Vegas to say that the March of Dimes has a bereavement packet that could be helpful. In addition to information regarding the loss, it contains a memory book for the lack of hair and/or footprint. The packet

can be obtained from local March of Dimes offices. Read on:

**Dear Abby:** My heart breaks for the friend who will soon lose the child she has grown to love. I have known many mothers

and fathers who have lost children very young (even through miscarriage), and each one has treasured any reminder of the child they lost. Many hospitals have programs run by volunteers that provide a blanket and a tiny hat to be made available to the grieving parents. "Caring Friend" should give her friend the option of choosing gentle reminders of her love and strength in this time of need, or a small, quiet ceremony of her love to make things easier for her. My guess is she'll choose both. I know I would.

— **Mother of Four in Virginia**

**Dear Mother of Four:** Thank you for the input. I received a stack of letters from readers echoing your sentiments and offering suggestions.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 6940, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the internet at <http://www.uxpress.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate

## JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

**TOORB**

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**GHILT**

**POUDIM**

**MOOGLY**

www.puzzle.com

**A: A** " " " "

Yesterday's Jumbles: **POKE** **INSET** **LUNACY** **FIESTA**  
Answer: An indifferent student can do this in astronomy class — **TAKE UP "SPACE"**

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion



WHAT THE FAST-TALKING MECHANIC SEEMED TO BE —

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

# Don't be in a rush to be kissed

**Dear Annie:** I just came back from my eighth-grade school trip. All of my friends were kissed, or they made out with guys they met. I have a really good friend, "Nate," and we have a lot of fun just talking, and I don't want to push him into anything. But I feel really pressured to get physical with him because all my friends have done that stuff.

**Annie's Mailbox**



**Dear Annie:** Six months ago, my in-laws moved into a local senior apartment complex. At the time, my father-in-law gave all his tools to my husband, and we placed them in our garage. The condition was that Dad would be able to come to our garage and use his tools.

Well, Annie, my father-in-law is in my garage EVERY day. Worse, my husband left a key to our house in the garage and Dad often pops in while I am still asleep. Dad also thinks he is a personal escort for anyone who visits. Even the utility workers cannot enter without my father-in-law, and he insists they enter from the basement, which means I have to go down there and lock it after they leave, since Dad never remembers.

I am usually the only person at home when Dad drops by. I feel like I have a baby-sitter. My husband is somewhat understanding, and we are working with some non-profit groups to see if we can

get them interested in my father-in-law's mechanical talents, but if that doesn't work out, my husband refuses to do anything that would limit his father's access to our home.

I love my father-in-law dearly and don't want to hurt his feelings or take him away from his tools. Do you have any other suggestions?

— **Ready To Burst Daughter-in-Law**

**Dear Ready To Burst:** Your husband should tell his father that he is welcome to use the garage, but not the house. If he isn't willing to do this, approach your father-in-law and say, "Dad, I'm glad you feel comfortable here, but I'd rather you give me some notice before entering the house. Sometimes I'm not dressed. I'm going to keep the deadbolt locked until I am ready for company."

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to [anniesmailbox@comcast.net](mailto:anniesmailbox@comcast.net), or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

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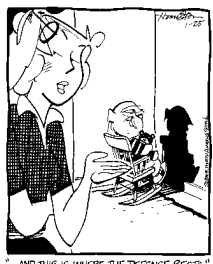
## Family Circus



"I don't know where the time goes either, Grandma, but I'll keep an eye out for it."

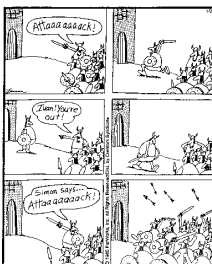


Domis the Menace



© Gary Larson

The Far Side



Non Sequitur





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# Woods ends drought in bizarre Buick

BY DOUG FERGUSON

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Tiger Woods won't get any style points for winning the Buick Invitational.

Usually an intimidating presence on the back nine, he was the guy having to scramble to make pars just to keep pace with Tom Lehman. Woods had two chances to remove all the suspense at Torrey Pines, and he responded by missing a 6-foot birdie putt at No. 17, and whiffing on a 2-iron approach to the 18th. All that mattered in the fading sunlight Sunday was putting his hands

on the trophy.

"A great win," Woods said after a 4-under 68 on the South course at Torrey Pines, giving him a three-shot victory over Lehman, Luke Donald and hard-luck Charles Howell III. "It was a battle out there."

The only thing that looked vaguely familiar was Woods smiling wide on the 18th green, hugging his caddy and posing with an oversized check — \$864,000 that put him atop the PGA Tour money list.

Everything else was as bizarre as the fog that seeped quickly across Torrey Pines and reduced visibility so much that the Buick Invitational nearly had its first Monday finish in the 53-year history.

How strange was it? Woods figured he would need a 32 on the back nine to win. He shot 35 and won by three.

He hit a shot so badly that it actually turned out to be good.

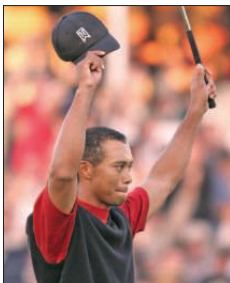
With a one-shot lead on the par-5 18th and Lehman already having laid up, Woods tried to hit a 2-iron from 240 yards over the pond to the right side of the green.

"I absolutely whiffed it," Woods said.

Lucky him.

He fanned it so much to the right that it found a narrow strip of fairway just right of the pond. Lehman needed a birdie to have any chance of a playoff, but instead hit his sand wedge short. He was lucky it hung up on the hill instead of going into the water.

Woods then played a pitch above the hole, hopeful it would spin back down toward the cup. It didn't, leaving him a slippery 18-footer. He wanted to die the ball into the cup, but rapped it too hard. But the putt was on the



Tiger Woods celebrates as he birdies the 18th hole to secure victory in the Buick Invitational.

right line, and it dove into the cup for a birdie that ended an odd tournament.

Lehman summed it up best.

"He whipped the field playing lousy," Lehman said. "I give him a lot of credit."

Woods finished at 16-under 272, his first come-from-behind victory in the final round since the 2001 NEC Invitational, and his first stroke-play title on the PGA Tour since the 2003 American Express Championship. His only victory last year was the Match Play Championship.

Even so, Woods needed some help.

First to his defense were those crazy golfing gods, who conspired against Howell. He was at 14 under when his sand wedge from 95 yards into the 18th green was perfect.

Too perfect, it turns out.

The ball landed in the bottom of the cup, ricocheted out and went into the pond, turning an eagle into a bogey. Howell took off his cap and stared in disbelief.

"I knew I hit the shot perfect," Howell said after his 72. "And then to hit the hole and go into the water. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Obviously, it's a crazy game."

Donald was a model of consistency, giving

himself a birdie putt on every hole through No. 13 and building a one-shot lead. He had control of the tournament until two bad swings. The first one was a 6-iron that went over the 14th green and into a hazard, leading to double bogey. Then he pulled his tee shot on No. 17 into the bushes and had to scramble for a bogey, leaving him at 73 and three shots behind.

The final gift came from Lehman.

He was trying to become the first active Ryder Cup captain since Jack Nicklaus (1986 Masters) to win on tour. He played 32 holes on Sunday, and had no complaints about the first 30.

But from the middle of the 17th fairway, with an 8-iron in his hand and tied for Woods at 15 under, he caught a plugged lie in the bunker. His shot hit the flag, but that only slowed it enough to leave him a 12-footer, and Lehman missed. Then he botched the sand wedge on No. 18, running his record to 0-7 with at least a share of the 54-hole lead, dating to the 1996 Tour Championship.

"I'm ticked I didn't win," Lehman said after his 73.

Even Woods realized in victory that it's a crazy game.

"I hit it great at Mercedes and lost. I didn't hit it good here and won," Woods said. "It comes down to making putting. I hit it close enough this week. I had some opportunities to make putts, and I did."

## Quigley beats Watson in playoff

KAUPULEHU-KONA, Hawaii — Dana Quigley made a 3-foot par putt on the third playoff hole and beat a faltering Tom Watson on Sunday to win the season-opening MasterCard Championship for the second time in three years.

Watson, who led after the first two rounds, made a bogey after he hit into the lava behind the 17th green at Hualalai Golf Club.

Quigley, who also missed the green long, putted past the hole and made the comeback attempt. He closed with a 6-under 66, but his three-putt from the fringe on the final hole of regulation allowed Watson to move into a tie at 18-under 198.

Watson started the round with a three-stroke lead, but missed two 4-foot putts for par on the back nine for his only two bogeys in regulation, closing with a 2-under 70.

## Huskies 'tough out' the grind

The Associated Press

SEATTLE — The Washington Huskies didn't look forward to playing grind-it-out Washington State.

"It was something we're definitely not used to," Jamaal Williams said. "You just have to tough it out."

Nate Robinson scored 13 points and the No. 10 Huskies moved into a tie for the Pac-10 lead with a 66-48 victory over the Cougars on Sunday.

Williams and freshman Joel Smith came off the bench to each score 10 points for the Huskies (16-2, 6-1), who won their 18th straight at home and tied a school record with their 12th straight Pac-10 home win.

The Huskies are tied for first with Arizona (6-1), which beat Oregon State 92-83 last Saturday night.

It wasn't a classic Washington offensive performance. The Huskies shot a season-worst 35.9 percent from the field (23-for-64) and 3-for-13 from three-point range, but coach Dick Bennett's ball-control Cougars had a lot to do with that.

The purple-clad student section didn't appreciate the Cougars' deliberate, slowdown tactics, chanting, "Boring, boring, boring," in the second half.

Washington came into the game averaging 89.4 points a game, topped in the Pac-10 the second in the nation. The Huskies had their lowest point total of the season. They have scored 100 or more points in four games this season.

Huskies coach Lorenzo Romar still felt good afterward, though.

"The fact that we were able to win by 18 points despite it not being an uptempo game makes you feel pretty good," he said. "If we would do this every time we play them, we wouldn't have to be uptempo."

Washington will be in Tucson Thursday night to play Arizona in a season game. The Huskies beat the Wildcats three times last season.

## Army ends skid by routing Navy

The Associated Press

WEST POINT, N.Y. — Matt Bell scored 20 points to help Army snap an eight-game losing streak Sunday and earn its largest victory over arch-rival Navy in 35 years, 63-43.

Grant Carter had 11 points for Army (3-14, 1-4 Patriot League) and Cory Sinning had 12.

Matt Fannin scored 17 points for Navy (4-14, 0-5), which suffered its seventh loss in a row.

Navy coach Billy Lange suffered the worst loss ever by a Midshipmen coach in his debut against Army.

Bell scored 11 of his 20 points in the second half as Army outscored the Midshipmen 31-19 in the final 20 minutes.

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# Venus, Myskina, Dementieva eliminated

## Hewitt wins in five sets despite injury; Roddick, Davenport also advance

BY PAUL ALEXANDER

The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Venus Williams lost to Alicia Molik of Australia 7-5, 7-6 (3) Monday in the fourth round of the Australian Open, extending her Grand Slam drought and keeping her from joining sister Serena in the quarterfinals.

Williams was seeking her fifth Grand Slam title and first since winning the 2001 U.S. Open. She reached five finals after that, but hasn't made it past the quarterfinals of a major since injuring an abdominal muscle in mid-2003.

Molik, the Olympic bronze medalist last year in Athens, will face No. 1 seed and 2000 champion Lindsay Davenport, who polished off Karolina Sprem 6-2, 6-2 earlier Monday. It's the first time that Molik, who stretched her winning streak to 12 matches, has reached the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam.

"This is a huge test. I beat Venus," Molik said. "I beat her and I didn't want for her to make mistakes, and that's something I can be pretty proud of."

She broke the eighth-seeded Williams at love to finish off the first set, then fought off five break points in the second.

Both players held to a tie-breaker, where Molik showed her best, jumping to a 4-0 lead, then falling again on a running forehand that she netted. She shook it off and finished off the match when Williams weakly hit a forehand into the net.

Molik refused to wilt under Williams' power attack, firing seven aces and other winners that kissed the lines.

"I couldn't quite get a handle on what was going wrong," Williams said. "Normally if I'm playing 5 percent better, I'd win."

Molik became the first Australian woman to reach the quarters since Anne Minter 17 years ago. Fellow Aussie Lleyton Hewitt also advanced Monday, overcoming a sore right hip to beat unseeded Rafael Nadal 7-5, 3-6, 1-6, 7-6 (3), 6-2 victory.

Trying to finish points quickly to limit his momentum, Hewitt committed five consecutive errors in the fourth set after going ahead 0-40 while holding a 3-2 lead.

He then proved that he deserved his reputation as a "battler."

Hewitt got to a tiebreaker and won it, punctuating the points with his trademark fist pumps and shouts of "Come on!"

That got the fans roaring and

left the 18-year-old Nadal shaking his head.

Being pushed to five sets seemed to take some of the steam out of Nadal. He asked for a massage on his left thigh after Hewitt broke twice and ran off a 3-0 lead in the deciding fifth set.

While serving for the match at 5-2, Hewitt had a double-fault and two unforced errors to give Nadal a pair of break points. He fought back to deuce, double-faulted on his first match point and squandered a second, then finished with an ace and a backhand from Nadal that sailed just long after a lengthy rally.

Hewitt dropped his knees in celebration as the crowd roared.

"This crowd is second to none," said Hewitt, who also rallied for Davis Cup victories on the same court. "I was hurting a little bit in the third set. You try to get all of the negative thoughts out of your mind."

Hewitt added that the injury, first sustained in a warm-up tournament in Sydney, should not affect him in his next match, when he will face the winner of an all Argentinean match between No. 6 Guillermo Coria and No. 9 David Nalbandian.

After three consecutive lefties, Andy Roddick struggled with the serve of right-handed German Philipp Kohlschreiber. But the second-seeded American smacked 15 aces and overcame a second-set letdown to reach the quarterfinals with a 6-3, 7-6 (8), 6-1 win.

"I think I actually had a little trouble getting used to a serve coming from a righty, as weird as that sounds," he said.

"Took me a little while to get on it."

He'll face another right-hander next, 25th-ranked Nikolay Davydenko, who beat No. 12 Guillermo Coria 6-3, 6-4, 6-3. Earlier in the tournament, Davenport eliminated No. 7 Tim Henman.

Roddick allowed the 16th-ranked Kohlschreiber only one break opportunity while he figured out his righty serve. He was erratic in the second set, doubling his number of unforced errors to 12 and throwing his racket to the court after sending a forehand long.

"I don't think I hit the ball as clean as I did in the first three matches," he said. "I just felt like I was fighting it a little bit more. I'm not too concerned. The good thing is I don't feel like I had my best day, and we're here talking about a three-set win."

Along with Venus Williams,



Venus Williams, the eighth seed, reacts in frustration during her fourth-round match against 10th-seeded Alicia Molik in the Australian Open at Melbourne Park on Monday. Molik won the match, 7-5, 7-6.



Third-seeded Lleyton Hewitt overcame a hip injury and a 2-1 sets deficit to beat Rafael Nadal in five sets, 7-5, 3-6, 1-6, 7-6, 6-2.

Anastasia Myskina, the French Open champion, and No. 6 Elena Dementieva, the runner-up at the French and U.S. Opens, were eliminated.

Myskina and Dementieva were among seven Russians to make it to the round of 16, but only Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova and U.S. Open titlist Svetlana Kuznetsova reached the quarterfinals.

They will face each other on Tuesday, when men's No. 1 seed Roger Federer will try to keep his

25-match winning streak alive against four-time Australian Open winner Andre Agassi, seeded eighth.

Myskina had 45 unforced errors in her 6-4, 6-2 loss to 19th-seeded Nathalie Dechy.

"I couldn't focus during the match, I lost a lot of easy balls," Myskina said. "I think I have to forget this match."

Dementieva led 12th-seeded Patty Schnyder by a set and two breaks before losing (6-7, 6-7 (4), 6-2.

### Tennis scoreboard

#### Australian Open

##### Monday

At Melbourne Park  
Melbourne, Australia  
Purse: \$14.5 million (Grand Slam)  
Surface: Hard-Outdoor

##### Singles

###### Men

Andy Roddick (2), United States, def. Philipp Kohlschreiber, Germany, 6-3, 7-6 (6), 6-1.  
Nikolay Davydenko (26), Russia, def. Guillermo Coria (12), Argentina, 6-3, 6-4, 6-3.  
Lleyton Hewitt (3), Australia, def. Rafael Nadal, Spain, 7-5, 3-6, 1-6, 7-6 (8), 6-2.

###### Women

##### Fourth Round

Patty Schnyder (12), Switzerland, def. Elena Dementieva (6), Russia, 6-7 (6), 7-6 (4), 6-2.  
Lindsay Davenport (1), United States, def. Karolina Sprem (13), Croatia, 5-2, 6-2.  
Nathalie Dechy (19), France, def. Anastasia Myskina (13), Russia, 6-4, 6-2.  
Alicia Molik (10), Australia, def. Venus Williams (8), United States, 7-5, 7-6 (3).

##### Doubles

###### Men

Michael Llodra and Fabrice Santoro (6), France, def. Wesley Moodie, South Africa, and Nenad Zimonjic, Serbia-Montenegro, 6-3, 7-6 (3).  
Tomás Berdych, Czech Republic, and Andrei Pavel, Romania, def. Ashley Fisher, Australia, and Travis Parrott, United States, 6-7 (7), 6-4, 6-3.

Jonas Björkman, Sweden, and Max Mirnyi (4), Belarus, def. Simon Aspelin, Sweden, and Todd Perry (16), Australia, 6-2, 4-6, 7-6 (5).

###### Women

##### Third Round

Anel Medina Garrigues, Spain, and Dinara Safina, Russia, def. Chieh-Yueh-jung, Taiwan, and Rika Fujiwara, Japan, 6-2, 6-3.  
Gabriela Navratilova and Michaela Paštikova, Czech Republic, def. Janet Lee, Taiwan, and Peng Shuai, China, 6-2, 4-6, 6-1.

Eleni Daniilidou, Greece, and Nicole Pietrangeli (16), Australia, def. Marion Bartoli, France, and Anna-Lena Groenefeld, Germany, 6-3, 2-6, 6-4.

##### Men

##### Second Round

Wayne Carr Black (2), Zimbabwe, def. Rick Leach, United States, and Virginia Ruano Pascual, Spain, 5-7, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (8).



Austria's Hermann Maier, left, is congratulated by second-place finisher Daron Rahlves from the United States after winning the men's World Cup super-G race in Kitzbuehel, Austria, on Monday.

## Maier edges Rahlves in super-G

By ERICA BULMAN  
The Associated Press

KITZBUEHEL, Austria — Hermann Maier of Austria won a super giant slalom Monday for his first World Cup victory this season, and Daron Rahlves of the United States was a close second despite a bruising, somersaulting spill two weeks ago.

"It was horrible execution," Miller shared fifth place. Austria's Benjamin Raich, Miller's main challenger for the overall crown, was seventh. With the victory, Maier replaced Miller atop the super-G standings.

"I just skied badly," Miller said. "It was horrible execution." Maier won by 0.02 seconds, racing down the Streifalm course in 1 minute, 22.39 seconds and averaging a loss to Rahlves. The American had won by 0.03 seconds a year ago to hand Maier his first super-G defeat on the famed slope.

"It's always great to win here on the Austrian mountain," said Maier, who skied in a circle after his race and pointed his right index finger to signal he was No. 1 again. "I knew Daron was one of the favorites. Coming back after two weeks off after he hurt himself, I knew he would be very motivated."

Austria's Fritz Strobl was third in 1:22.93, and Switzerland's Didier Defago was fourth in 1:23.02. Miller and Norway's Aksel Lund Svindal followed in 1:23.06.

"It's frustrating to ski so badly and finish so close," Miller said. "I put down 15 seconds of good skiing in a minute-and-20-second-long super-G and still finished fifth. You've got to be happy with that."

Rahlves has 10 World Cup victories and finished fifth in last year's overall standings. He arrived in Kitzbuehel still in pain from the giant slalom crash in Adelboden and was unsure whether to race.

Maier has four super-G wins at the venue, including a stunning comeback victory just five races after returning from a motorcycle

### Sports briefs

accident in which he nearly lost his leg. He also won the downhill on the slope in 2001. He skipped the Lauberhorn downhill in Wengen, Switzerland, last week.

Miller, watching Rahlves slowly chip at his overall lead, earned nine points more than the Austrian on Monday. Miller is first with 1,093 points, 175 ahead of Raich. Maier, the defending overall champion, climbed to third with 730.

#### One-third of World Cup tickets will be available to public

FRANKFURT, Germany — Only about one-third of the seats for the 2006 World Cup will be available to the public. The seating capacity for the 64 games is 3.37 million, but about 440,000 tickets are reserved for honorary guests and media.

Organizers said Monday about 2.93 million tickets would be available for sale. But this would be reduced by the needs of sponsors, 205 soccer federations that are members of soccer's world governing body and others.

The actual number of tickets available to the public will be limited to about 1.1 million.

The first phase of sales, which begins Feb. 1 and mostly online, will offer 812,000 tickets. Each person will be able to order a maximum of 28 tickets — up to four for seven games.

The first phase ends March 31. Tickets will be distributed through a lottery system. More selling phases will follow — Dec. 1, 2005 to Jan. 15, 2006, Feb. 1, 2006 to April 15, 2006 and May 1, 2006 to July 9, 2006.

Tickets range from \$46 to \$784.

On the Net: FIFA.com; fifaworldcup.com

#### Salzburg is Austria's candidate for 2014 Winter Games

SALZBURG, Austria — Salzburg was chosen over Innsbruck on Monday as Austria's candidate for the 2014 Winter Olympics.

After failing in a bid for the 2010 Games, Salzburg was picked for a second time by Austria's national Olympic committee.

Salzburg was a finalist for the 2010 Olympics, but finished a distant third — behind the winner, Vancouver, British Columbia, and Pyeongchang, South Korea.

South Korea has announced that Pyeongchang will try again for 2014, while Sweden plans to enter a joint bid with Oestersund and Are. Sofia, Bulgaria, and Munich, Germany, are other possible bidders.

The deadline to submit bids is July 28, 2005. The International Olympic Committee will select the finalists in June 2006 and choose the host city in July 2007.

The next Winter Olympics are in Turin, Italy in 2006.

#### Lennox Lewis denies reports of comeback

LONDON — Former world heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis denied a published report that he will end his retirement to fight Vitali Klitschko in November.

The London tabloid the Sunday Mirror quoted Lewis as saying, "I'm making a comeback later this year."

But later Sunday, Lewis released a statement saying he was not making a comeback.

"I want to reiterate what I said when I retired in February 2004 that I was fortunate to leave the sport on my own terms and that I will be one of the few heavyweight champions in history to retire on top and stay retired," he said.

Lewis, 39, retired Feb. 6 with a 41-21 record. Klitschko assumed the title April 15, 2004 when he beat Corrie Sanders.

Lewis and Klitschko last fought in June 2003. Lewis was behind on points when the fight was stopped in the sixth round because Klitschko was cut.

That was Lewis' last fight and he was booed out of the ring after a poor performance. The WB network mandated a rematch, but Lewis retired instead.

## Delgado playing the field

By RONALD BLUM  
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The New York Mets and Carlos Delgado resumed talks Monday, a day after the free-agent first baseman left the team's deadline for a deal pass.

The Texas Rangers withdrew their offer Sunday, and Delgado's agent, David Sloane, said the Mets had pulled out, too, although the team said it was awaiting a response. Sloane and the Mets talked again Monday, two people with knowledge of the talks said on the condition of anonymity.

Florida and Baltimore also were trying to sign Delgado.

While the field for Delgado narrowed, former Mets captain John Franco made his decision, agreeing Sunday to a \$700,000, one-year contract with the Houston Astros. And the Yankees added a backup infielder, agreeing to a \$600,000, one-year contract with Rey Sanchez, a deal subject to his passing a physical and finalization of contract language.

On Sunday night, after a conversation among Sloane, Mets Chief Operating Officer Jeff Wilpon and General Manager Omar Minaya, New York was unsure where it stood.

"I called and I spoke to Mr. Sloane tonight, and we let him know we were trying to get a resolution on this matter this evening," Minaya said in a statement Sunday. "He said he would consider our thoughts to Carlos, and he would call us back after speaking with Carlos. We have yet to receive that call."

With the Rangers, where Delgado would play became an issue Sunday.

"From the first conversation with the Texas Rangers, we made it crystal clear that Carlos Delgado had no interest in being a full-time DH," Sloane said. "If we had 25 conversations with the Texas Rangers, we were told in 24 of those that the question of him playing first base was no issue. Earlier today, we were told that is changing and that 75 per-

cent of his at-bats, should he choose to sign with the Texas Rangers, would come as a DH."

"After three months of negotiations, we were given less than five hours to tell them yes or no, to make a decision that affects not only the rest of Carlos Delgado's baseball career, but the rest of his life."

Rangers owner Tom Hicks met with Delgado in Puerto Rico and offered a \$48 million, four-year contract.

"Over the last few days, Tom Hicks and the organization reached out and made a very strong offer to Carlos Delgado," Texas General Manager John Hart said. "We had a great meeting with Carlos on Friday where we exceeded the limits of our initial proposal. As of this evening, however, we could not get a commitment from him, so we are withdrawing from discussions with him."

"He is a quality individual, but we want to continue to be committed with our young players and development plan. We have a first baseman in Mark Teixeira and other young players that we do not want to disrupt with potential position changes. Tom Hicks is not, and was not, afraid to spend money to add players like Carlos to our club."

Hicks implied that the Rangers didn't want Delgado to use their offer as a springboard.

Franco, a 44-year-old left-hander, spent his first six seasons with the Cincinnati Reds and the last 15 with his hometown Mets.

The four-time All-Star who is second to Lee Smith in career saves with 424, Franco was 2-7 with a 5.28 ERA last year.

"Change is good sometimes," he said. "I've been here for 15 years. It's not going to kill me to be there for 31 days."

Sanchez, 37, also was with the Yankees in the final weeks of the 1997 season, hitting .312 with one homer and 15 RBIs in 38 games.

He batted .246 with two homers and 26 RBIs for Tampa Bay last season.

AP Sports Writer Stephen Hawkins in Dallas contributed to this report.

## Indians, Westbrook avoid arbitration, agree to deal

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Jake Westbrook, nearly an afterthought before emerging as Cleveland's most consistent starter last season, agreed to a two-year contract with the Indians on Monday and avoided salary arbitration.

Westbrook, who made \$1 million in 2004, asked for \$3 million in arbitration and was offered \$2.5 million by the club. His agreement with the Indians includes a team option for 2007.

Westbrook, 26, was drafted and youngsters Cliff Lee and Jason Davis had ERA's over 5.00, Westbrook went 14-9 with a 3.38

ERA in 30 starts and was selected to All-Star in his first full season in the big leagues. He also had five complete games, tying for the league lead.

Cleveland never expected that Westbrook, who went to spring training trying to win a spot in the starting rotation. He began the year as the club's long reliever before becoming a starter at the end of April.

With Westbrook, Sabathia, Lee and newly signed Kevin Millwood, the Indians struck a starting nucleus capable of keeping them in contention for a play-off berth.

# Brady leads Pats to third AFC title in four seasons

BY ALAN ROBINSON  
The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The New England Patriots turned Big Ben into Gent Ben, and transformed the NFL's best-record team into another overwhelmed opponent that couldn't match the big plays they made, the intensity they brought or the leadership they possessed.

The Pittsburgh Steelers and their 15-game winning streak weren't nearly good enough to beat the Patriots with the AFC championship on the line, not even in the stadium where New England was overwhelmed 2½ months before.

The Patriots' 41-27 rout Sunday sent them to their third Super Bowl in four seasons — this time, against the Philadelphia Eagles on Feb. 6 in Jacksonville — and was just another in an ever-growing series of playoff performances that could soon stamp them as one of the best teams ever.

Tom Brady was too precise, too determined, and too experienced for Steelers rookie quarterback Ben Roethlisberger to match.

Roethlisberger tried getting away with the same mistakes he made in a great-escape overtime win over the New York Jets the week before but didn't come close.

Not against this team, this quarterback, this coach, not even during this improbable Steelers season that saw them end the Patriots' record 21-game streak 44-20 on Oct. 31. That performance has driven New England ever since.

It certainly motivated Coach Bill Belichick, who blistered his team after what he felt was a poor practice last Wednesday.

## Patriots 41, Steelers 27

New England 34 14 10-27  
Pittsburgh 14 13 10-27

NE — QB Tom Brady 48, 11/20.  
Steelers — QB Ben Roethlisberger 6, 6/12.  
Pats — RB Fred McRae 12, 1/27.  
Steelers — RB Ben Roethlisberger 1, 1/27.

Second Quarter  
NE — QB Tom Brady 10, 1/27.  
Steelers — QB Ben Roethlisberger 1, 1/27.  
Pats — RB Fred McRae 12, 1/27.  
Steelers — RB Ben Roethlisberger 1, 1/27.

Third Quarter  
Pats — RB Fred McRae 12, 1/27.  
Steelers — RB Ben Roethlisberger 1, 1/27.  
Pats — RB Fred McRae 12, 1/27.  
Steelers — RB Ben Roethlisberger 1, 1/27.

Fourth Quarter  
Pats — RB Fred McRae 12, 1/27.  
Steelers — RB Ben Roethlisberger 1, 1/27.  
Pats — RB Fred McRae 12, 1/27.  
Steelers — RB Ben Roethlisberger 1, 1/27.

Final Score  
Pats — RB Fred McRae 12, 1/27.  
Steelers — RB Ben Roethlisberger 1, 1/27.  
Pats — RB Fred McRae 12, 1/27.  
Steelers — RB Ben Roethlisberger 1, 1/27.

First Downs  
Total Net Yards  
Rushing Yards  
Passing Yards  
Turnovers  
Penalties  
Time of Possession

NE — 20, 11/20.  
Steelers — 13, 10/27.  
Pats — 33, 10/27.  
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is even better, and he showed why he might soon be the generation's Bradshaw or Montana.

While Roethlisberger threw three interceptions, Brady tossed two scoring passes and no interceptions during a nearly flawless night.

One week it's Peyton Manning, the next it's Big Ben. No matter the opposing quarterback, or the challenge, Brady always seems to have an answer.

"He is a great leader. He is everything that defines what a leader is," offensive lineman Matt Light said of Brady. "He motivates this team and he motivates everybody."

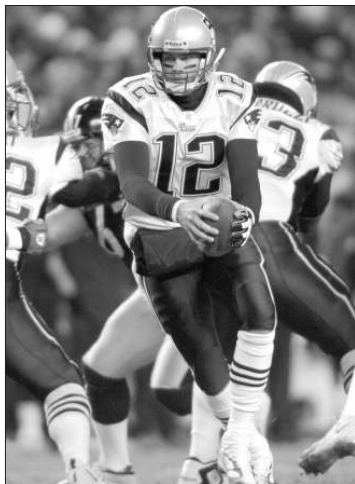
The Steelers came out as cold as the 11-degree weather by turning the ball over on a Roethlisberger-thrown interception and Jerome Bettis' fumble on their first two possessions. Predictably, the Patriots surged to a 10-0 lead on Brady's 60-yard scoring pass to Deion Branch and Adam Vinatieri's 48-yard field goal, which tied as the longest at Heinz Field.

Branch later set up Brady's 9-yard TD pass to David Givens with a 45-yard catch, and he also had a 23-yard TD run. Roethlisberger also was intercepted for a touchdown on a second consecutive game, by Rodney Harrison for 87 yards to make it 24-3 late in the first half.

Sound familiar? During the Halloween game, the Steelers forced several turnovers, surged into a 24-3 lead and kept the Patriots from running the ball by building an 11-0 lead in the second half.

"We demand a lot from our players," Belichick said. "I'm happy they have this kind of achievement to show for it."

All the Steelers have to show for the greatest regular season (15-1)



KRT

Patriots quarterback Tom Brady looks to hand off the ball in the first quarter of the AFC championship game against the Steelers on Sunday.

in the franchise's 73-season history is their fourth loss in five AFC title games under coach Bill Cowher since the 1994 season.

It also was the second AFC championship game loss to New England at home in four seasons.

This probably hurt the worst of all because their season had been so magical, from Roethlisberger's unexpected emergence to Bettis' remarkable comeback season and their consecutive midseason victories over the previously unbeaten Patriots and Eagles.

Now, those teams will play for the Super Bowl trophy that has eluded the Steelers since they

won the last of their four NFL titles in six seasons from 1974-79.

The Steelers had a chance to cut it to 31-24 early in the fourth quarter after driving to a first down at the 5, only to be turned aside on three consecutive plays. Then, Cowher effectively halted their momentum by going for Jeff Reed's 20-yard field goal rather than the touchdown, and Pittsburgh was never in it again.

"I don't think that the decade by any stretch of the imagination," said Bettis, who ran for 64 yards while being held below 100 yards for the first time in eight starts. "We just couldn't do anything after that."

# Time finally runs for Big Ben, Pittsburgh

**T**he best story of the NFL season, the one about the kid who was going to take his team where no rookie quarterback had gone before, ended on a night every bit as cruel as it was cold. And man, was it ever cold.

With the temperature at 11 degrees for kicking and ice flurries raining the Ohio River alongside Heinz Field, Ben Roethlisberger threw an interception on his first pass and never quite regained his footing, slipping, sliding and stumbling in his worst performance in the biggest game of the Steelers' remarkable season.

That was no surprise. The man who greased the skids has been making defensive schemes for as long as Roethlisberger has been on the planet.

Sometime genius and full-time Patriots coach Bill Belichick was already a half-dozen years into his career and drawing up defensive schemes for his fourth team by the time Big Ben was born.

"I don't know if there was a better quarterback back there, whether he makes the plays or not. But you saw what they did to Peyton Manning last week," Roethlisberger said, "and what they did to a rookie this one."

## Jim Litke

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The kid showed up Sunday already at a crossroad, rare for someone whose tenure in the league was measured in months. But such was the fever that took hold in Pittsburgh after Roethlisberger rushed into the starting job after Tommy Maddox went down in the second game of the season, took over the controls of the offense and took off on an unbeaten run that would stretch to 14 games.

There were jokes about renaming the town "Roethlisburgh." The locals consumed pound after pound of beef jerky and burgers named after him, and made his No. 7 jersey the league's best-seller.

Sales never slowed, even after their perfect quarterback proved only too imperfect in a 20-17 overtime win against the Jets a week ago. Theories abounded about whether Roethlisberger — the cool, confident passer or the selfish rookie — would show up as the AFC championship's home-ice advantage.

record crowd of 65,242 had finished snuggling into their seats.

Roethlisberger's first throw was high and hard, thudding off the hands of receiver Antwan Randle El, then tipped by Pats corner Asante Samuel before teammate Eugene Wilson came up with it. That led to New England's first score, a field goal.

Roethlisberger wasn't as lucky the second time he threw an interception: Pats safety Rodney Harrison stepped in front of that one and returned it 87 yards up the left sideline.

"We knew he has happy feet," Harrison said afterward. "He throws the ball up. We knew we could make some plays on him."

"A veteran quarterback who's been in the NFL, that atmosphere knows the pressure gets bigger and bigger."

The "veteran quarterback" Harrison had in mind was teammate Tom Brady, who at 27 has three years and four more seasons in the NFL, than Roethlisberger. Belichick made no such comparison, but his praise for Brady was even more revealing.

"Tom, to me, is kind of the same guy every day and every game. I don't think the magnitude of the game or the crowd noise or the situation bothers him. He's able to focus on what he has to do," Belichick said.

chick said. "There's no quarterback I would rather have."

Maybe not. But Belichick's second choice would almost certainly be a rookie like Roethlisberger. While the kid's numbers were brilliant for a first-year performer — a .98 passer rating and a 66 percent completion percentage — it's also true that the rest of the league began to make up ground as the season wore on.

Roethlisberger had a dozen excuses available: inexperience, an injured thumb, a running game that suddenly lost much of its grit and most of its punch, a game plan so unimaginative that he never had a chance. He didn't avail himself of even one.

"Not everything is fair," Roethlisberger said. "You have to realize that. Only one team is going to end the season the way they wanted to, and that is the Super Bowl champs. We will rebound. This will be a big offseason for me and this offense."

And with that, the kid turned, walked through the door and out into the bone-chilling cold, a little bruised and a lot smarter for the lesson the genius and his defense had just taught him.

Jim Litke is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at: jlitke@ap.org



# Finally, Philly getting shot at Super Bowl

BY PAUL NEWBERRY

The Associated Press

**PHILADELPHIA** — Fireworks soared above the roof of "The Linc." A blizzard of glitter swirled in the bitterly cold breeze.

Fans toasted their team and each other with beers and hugs.

It was a Super-sized celebration four years in the making. And quite a relief, too.

Yo, Philly, how's this sound? Your Eagles are going to the Super Bowl.

Danovan McNabb & Co. overcame the burden of three straight losses in the NFC championship game and warmed a frozen city's heart, stuffing Michael Vick and the Atlanta Falcons' 27-10 on Sunday.

McNabb isn't satisfied yet.

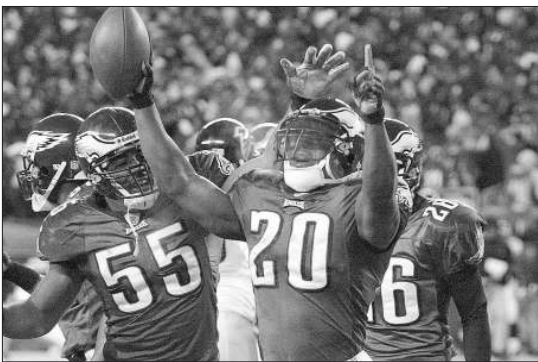
"There's no relief for me," he said. "We'll have another for the Super Bowl. We set a goal of winning the Super Bowl, not just the NFC. So that's where I'm going. We're excited, but we're not done."

The Eagles already have soothed a city's fragile psyche, burying the disappointment of the last three years and putting within one victory of Philly's first major pro championship since the '76ers won the NBA title in 1983.

Twenty-four years ago, the Eagles made it to their first — and, until Sunday, only — Super Bowl with a team coached by Dick Vermeil and led by Ron Jaworski. They fell flat in the title game, losing to the Raiders 27-10.

That score went the Eagles' way this time. They will meet New England in Jacksonville, Fla., on Feb. 6 for the NFL championship.

"We want to go to Jacksonville and get some closure and finish



Philadelphia Eagles defender Brian Dawkins (20) reacts after a third quarter interception of Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick. With Dawkins are teammates Dhanji Owens (55) and Lito Sheppard (26).

this up," receiver Freddie Mitchell said.

The fourth consecutive appearance in the NFC title game proved to be the charm for the Eagles, even though they didn't have top receiver Terrell Owens — reduced to the role of MVP (Most Valuable Cheerleader) — on the sideline.

Nothing was going to stand in the way of this team, which entered the season with a Super Bowl or Bust mentality and met those enormous expectations.

McNabb threw a pair of touchdown passes to Chad Lewis, including the clinching score with 3:21 remaining. That turned the final minutes into a delirious coronation, the 67,717 fans saluting a team that fulfilled its destiny.

"Super Bowl! Super Bowl!" they chanted when Vick was halted for the two-minute warning.

The only warm-weather team left in the playoffs went into its biggest game of the year. Vick was sacked four times by the fearsome Philly defense, which also came up with a crucial interception that set up David Akers' second field goal.

The significance of the day was evident on the field — the Eagles pranced and posed after every big play and in the stands, where most of the fans never bothered to sit down on a 17-degree day.

The Eagles will be going for their first NFL title since 1960, which predates the Super Bowl by six seasons.

McNabb completed 17 of 26 passes for 180 yards, a workmanlike performance that solidified his position as one of the game's best quarterbacks. He also ran 10 times for 32 yards.

Vick's debut on the Super Bowl stage will have to wait. He completed just 11-for-24 for 136 yards, while the Eagles stifled defense kept him from pulling off one of his signature runs.

He ran it just four times for 26 yards, but gave up even more yards on the sacks. Derrick Burgess dropped the elusive quarterback twice, and Jevon Kearse kept Vick hemmed up on the other side. The Eagles didn't blitz much — a change in philosophy — but they made sure Vick didn't get a chance to warm up.

"I didn't get outside the pocket," Vick said. "I think that was their first priority."

Philadelphia held only 14-10 at halftime, a bit too close for a team that had lost to St. Louis, Tampa Bay and Carolina in the last three NFC title games. Even more galling — the two more recent defeats were at home.

But, as the sun gave way to a nearly full moon over Lincoln Financial Field, the Eagles dominated the final two quarters. Akers connected from 31 and 34 yards, then McNabb and Lewis teamed up to finish off the Falcons with their 2-yard touchdown.

Owens, who didn't play because of a severe ankle injury, had a prominent role nonetheless. He drew plenty of attention with his sideline antics, flapping his arms and waving a towel to urge on a crowd that didn't need any encouragement.

And he may just recover in time for the Super Bowl.

"I have a feeling he will," Reid said.

Owens' teammates filled in admirably. McNabb worked his passes around to eight players, led by Brian Westbrook with five catches for 39 yards. Westbrook also handled the bulk of the running load, carrying 16 times for 96 yards.

Then, it was time for the party — Philly-style.

"This is their fourth trip in a row to the championship game," said Akers, the Falcons' rookie coach. "They've been in this position before, and they played like they've been in this position before."

It was a great season for the Falcons, who came within one win of their second Super Bowl after going 5-11 last season. With Vick at quarterback, the future looks bright.

## Vick, Falcons can't warm up in title game loss

BY PAUL NEWBERRY

The Associated Press

**PHILADELPHIA** — Michael Vick trotted onto the field for the first time and shook his arms, trying to get the blood flowing on a frigid day in Philly.

Unfortunately for Vick and the Atlanta Falcons, he never warmed up.

The Philadelphia Eagles stifled Vick in the NFC championship game, stuffing the one-of-a-kind quarterback with a defense that laid off its customary blitz and just made sure he didn't escape the pocket.

The result: Philly romped to a 27-10 victory, moving on to the Super Bowl. The Falcons, meanwhile, will have to be content with their comeback year, going from 5-11 one win away from the NFL title game.

Eighteen games into the season, Vick said he's still got a lot to learn about the West Coast of-

fense, which was installed by rookie coach Jim Mora and his staff.

"It's going to take time," Vick said. "But next year, I promise, it's going to be a better year and I'm excited about it."

With all the pressure on him to carry the Falcons, Vick instead was downright mediocre. The relentless Eagles defense sacked him four times and shut down his running lanes, ensuring he didn't turn an ordinary looking play into something spectacular.

Warrick Dunn was neutralized, too, and the Falcons offense could do little else — especially in the second half.

Coming off a strong effort in a win last week against St. Louis, Vick hardly posted numbers good enough to get the Falcons to a Super Bowl. Vick was 11-for-24 for a modest 136 yards and an interception, and was held to 26 yards rushing on four carries.

Defensive end Derrick Burgess harassed Vick mercilessly, and

Vick seemed rattled while looking for receivers who were rarely open. Burgess sacked the elusive quarterback twice, and Hollis Thomas and Jevon Kearse also got sacks for a total loss of 53 yards.

Eagles linebacker Keith Adams added seven tackles and a deflected pass.

"Nobody respected us as a defense. Give me some respect right now," Philadelphia's Brian Dawkins said.

Vick was shaken up early in the first quarter when Burgess crushed him after an incomplete pass.

Vick had his fewest yards rushing in an entire game since Week 1 against San Francisco, when he ran for 10. In the season finale when he barely played against Seattle, Vick ran for 13 yards.

"They had Jevon Kearse on one end and another good defensive lineman (Burgess) on the other end keeping good containment and making sure that I didn't get outside the pocket," Vick said.

"They did a great job doing it, and the coverage they played in the secondary, they didn't allow our receivers to get off blocks and get downfield."

Vick gained half of his yards rushing against the Eagles on one play — his only dazzling run of the game.

After an interception by Brown was wiped out on a holding penalty, Vick took off like he alone could again be enough to lead the Falcons.

He dashed right, eluded Burgess and Kearse on the outside, then cut back up toward the middle for a 13-yard gain.

That was about the only highlight. Eagles quarterback Roy Determan had as many yards passing on a fake field goal attempt in the first quarter (3) than Vick (3).

"There is a lot we can take away from this season," Vick said.

"Overall, we had a great season, a great year for a team that is just a first-year team playing together."

### Eagles 27, Falcons 10

Atlanta Philadelphia 0 10 0 9-19

Phil—Levens 4 run (Akers kick), 4:16.

First Quarter

Phil—FG Feely 23, 10:15.

Second Quarter

Phil—Levens 3 pass from McNabb (Akers kick), 4:58.

Third Quarter

Phil—FG Akers 31, 8:55.

Fourth Quarter

Phil—Levens 3 pass from McNabb (Akers kick), 3:21.

Atlanta Philadelphia

First downs 201 22

Total Net Yards 202 326

Rushes-yards 26-99 33-156

Passing 136-107 170-170

Punt Returns 2-20 1-14

Interceptions 0 4-33

Sacked-Yards Lost 0-0 4-33

Fumbles-Lost 5-26 3-39

Penalties-Yards 1-0 2-9

Time of Possession 26:00 33:15

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing—Atlanta, Dunn 15-59, Vick 4-26, Duckett 7-14. Philadelphia, West-

brook 17-109, Dunn 1-4, McCray 1-3. Phil-

adelphia, Lewis 1-10, Vick 11-24, G. Lewis 1-10.

Passing—Atlanta, Vick 11-24-136, Deter-

man 3-10-33. Philadelphia, Crumpler 4-17,

Price 2-37, Finerman 1-29, Jenkins 1-9,

White 1-7, Dunn 1-4, McCray 1-3. Phil-

adelphia, Westbrook 5-39, Lewis 4-20,

Clark 2-6, McDaniel 2-0, Feely 1-13, L. Smith 1-2, Westbrook 1-13, Perry 1-3.

Missed field goals—None.

# Eagles TE Lewis out for Super Bowl; Owens uncertain

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia Eagles tight end Chad Lewis will miss the Super Bowl with a foot injury.

Lewis, who caught two touchdown passes in Philadelphia's 27-10 victory over Atlanta in the NFC championship game Sunday, will have surgery on Wednesday. He was hurt on his second TD grab, a 2-yard catch that sealed the victory.

Meanwhile, All-Pro wide receiver Terrell Owens' status is uncertain. Owens has been sidelined with an ankle injury since Dec. 19. Eagles coach Andy Reid said Owens has made "great progress," and will try to run on the ankle this week.

Lewis' injury, called a Lis



Franc sprain, is more common in automobile accidents and equestrian sports.

Eagles All-Pro safety Brian Dawkins missed nine games last season with a similar injury that wasn't as severe and didn't require surgery. In 2000, Eagles running back Duce Staley had surgery and missed the final 13 games, including playoffs, with an injury to the same joint.

Second-year pro L.J. Smith will take Lewis' spot in the starting lineup against New England in the Super Bowl on Feb. 6. Mike Bartrum, also the long snapper, is

the only other tight end on the roster. Reid said the team will try to add another tight end this week. Lewis backed up Bartrum as the long snapper.

Lewis, a three-time Pro Bowl selection, had 29 catches for 267 yards and three TDs in the regular season. His role had been reduced with the emergence of Smith, a second-round draft pick from Rutgers in 2003.

## ABC: Owens was second choice in towel skit — to Madden

LOS ANGELES — ABC's first choice for the infamous "Monday Night Football" dropped towel episode wasn't Terrell Owens — it was announcer John Madden.

For reasons that are unclear, Madden couldn't find the time to

perform for the skit. Owens, the Philadelphia Eagles' receiver, filled in for him in the steamy sketch that drew viewer protests and a network apology. Stephen McPherson on Sunday.

In the spoof that preceded the football game Nov. 15, "Desperate Housewives" actress Nicollette Sheridan persuaded Owens to skip the game by dropping the towel wrapped around her and jumping into his arms.

ABC initially thought it would be funny to have the, uh, less attractive Madden as the subject of Sheridan's ardor, McPherson said.

The towel-dropping was another last-minute addition to the script that plainly backfired, said Marc Cherry, executive producer

of "Desperate Housewives," who helped write it.

Cherry said it was all a mistake. But he and McPherson both said they were surprised at the reaction.

"I feel really bad about it," Cherry said. "I didn't want to upset people. I didn't realize that 'Monday Night Football' was such a family viewing experience. I wouldn't let my 5-year-old watch beer commercials with big-busted cheerleaders, but that's just me."

Sheridan, appearing before television writers Sunday, said the purpose was simply to amuse people.

"Taking a pop culture incident like that and turning it into precedence over the underlying problems of the world was absurd," Sheridan said.

## Super: Eagles clear one hurdle, find tougher test in Jacksonville

SUPER, FROM BACK PAGE

Owens and easily beat Minnesota and Atlanta in its two playoff games. That finally got the Eagles past the conference championship game they lost for three straight seasons and sent them on to Jacksonville, a relief perhaps more to their hypercritical and terminally insecure fans than to the players.

The Eagles are certainly worthy — getting to a championship game four straight years is an accomplishment, even if you lose the first three.

In Donovan McNabb, Philadelphia has a quarterback who has been in the running for the NFL's MVP award every year since 2000 but this one. And that was only because Peyton Manning broke Dan Marino's record for touchdown passes in a season and was nearly a unanimous choice.

In coach Andy Reid and his staff, especially coordinators Jim Johnson (defense) and Brad Childress (offense) they have a trio that compares favorably with Belichick and his two chief lieutenants: Romeo Crennel and Charlie Weiss.

So they have some reason to be optimistic.

But the Patriots demonstrated in beating a Pittsburgh team that had won 15 straight, that they are special, most notably because they are a team in the trust sense.

"Nobody cares about individual stats, just about winning, including our quarterback," said Adam Vinatieri, who stays in the background until — as he has done twice — he kicks the winning field goal as time is expiring in the Super Bowl.

So while that quarterback, Tom Brady, has become a major star and Vinatieri, Richard Seymour, Corey Dillon, Tedy Bruschi, Rodney Harrison and Willie McGinest are lesser luminaries, there is always someone with little name recognition making a big play. Brady and Harrison made them Sunday. Harrison's an 87-yard interception return in the second quarter that gave New England a 24-3 lead at intermission.



Wide receiver Deion Branch exemplifies the New England Patriots' team-first philosophy that has taken them to two Super Bowl titles.

But there were others, too, like Deion Branch, who caught a 60-yard touchdown pass and ran 23 yards for another score. And Jarvis Green, who filled in so well that no one noticed that Seymour, a Pro Bowler in three of his four seasons, was out again with a knee injury; and Roosevelt Colvin, a major free-agent acquisition relegated to spot duty after missing most of last season with a hip injury; and Eugene Wilson, a second-year safety who had two interceptions.

The Patriots coaches, in fact, are bigger names than their players: Belichick tied Vince Lombardi on Sunday for the best winning

percentage in playoff history (900); Weiss has already been hired as head coach at Notre Dame; and Crennel will almost surely be hired as Cleveland's head coach after the Super Bowl.

Wilson suggested after Sunday's win that maybe some of his teammates should get more individual recognition.

"I think we've got a lot of players that are overlooked because people think of us as such a team," he said, naming Harrison, Bruschi and Brady.

That's borne out by the Pro Bowl selections: Philadelphia has nine, led by McNabb and Owens. New England has four: Brady,

Seymour, Vinatieri and special teacher Larry Izzo.

But the betting public clearly thinks otherwise.

In fact, the line probably wouldn't be much different if Owens were healthy. The Eagles' star receiver strutted on the sideline and postured for the television cameras during Sunday's game, and Reid said afterward that he could be ready for the Super Bowl.

Belichick? He actually acknowledged that his team had played well, something he does rarely.

"There's a lot of blood and sweat that's put out there and I'm



happy that they have this kind of achievement to show for it," he said. "I've never been around a harder working bunch. They're a special group of guys."

They'll probably be even more special in a couple of weeks.

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First Sergeant  
JAMES "WOODY" BIGGS  
on winning this year's







## SPORTS



Wild weekend ends  
with Woods victory  
in Buick Invitational, Page 29

# Will it be Eagles' time ... ... or a team for all-time?

## Philly seeks first Super Bowl title; Pats playing for third in four years

BY DAVE GOLDBERG

The Associated Press

The Super Bowl matchup is as it should be: the best team in the AFC against the best team in the NFC. The problem for the Philadelphia Eagles is that the AFC club looks like it might be a team for the ages.

That, of course, would be the New England Patriots, who have won two of the past three NFL championships and are favored over the Eagles by 7 points, a spread that is likely to go up. Three hours after New England took apart Ben Roethlisberger and Pittsburgh 41-24 Sunday evening, enough money had come in on the Patriots that the line jumped a half point.

That is as it should be as the attention of the sporting world turns to Jacksonville for the game on Feb. 6.

Officials in north Florida already are on high security alert, rerouting traffic, beefing up Coast Guard patrols, even inspecting manholes at they prepare for the attention the Patriots and Eagles will receive.

Especially the Patriots, who are trying for their third Super Bowl victory in four years — a feat accomplished only by Dallas from 1992-95.

"Dynasty" probably isn't the right word for what they might accomplish — four years is a short dynasty.

But after Sunday's game, more than a few people were comparing Bill Belichick's Patriots to the Joe Montana/Steve Young/Jerry Rice/Ronnie Lott San Francisco teams that won five Super Bowls between 1981 and 1994. The 49ers might have had a few more had the NFC not been loaded with almost equally good Redskins, Giants, Bears and Cowboys teams during that period.

This is not to slight the Eagles, by far the best team in the NFC in a season in which that conference was as down as any has been in a long time.

They were 13-1 and dominating when Terrell Owens went out with a knee injury on Dec. 19. Philadelphia rested regulars and lost two games, but came back without



Philadelphia Eagles linebacker Jeremiah Trotter celebrates after stopping Atlanta Falcons running back Warrick Dunn for a 3-yard loss in the second quarter of the NFC championship game on Sunday. The Eagles defeated the Falcons 27-10.



New England Patriots RB Corey Dillon breaks away from Pittsburgh Steelers Chris Hope, left, and Troy Polamalu for a 25-yard TD during the third quarter of the AFC championship game.



Patriots' Eugene Wilson (26) and Teddy Bruschi celebrate after Wilson intercepted Steelers QB Ben Roethlisberger's first pass of the AFC title game. The Pats had three interceptions in the game.

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**Patriots make  
Roethlisberger  
look like  
rookie QB,  
end Steelers'  
15-game  
winning streak**

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**After three  
consecutive  
misses,  
Eagles get over  
NFC hurdle  
with victory  
over Falcons**

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## Venus' major drought continues in Australian

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